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VOL. XVII

WERNLE'S THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

VOL. II

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THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

PAUL WERNLE

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VOL. II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

In the first volume of this work Professor Wernle deals with the rise of the Christian religion as it manifests itself in the personality and teaching of Jesus and His immediate followers. This is the creative period, the period of great men. In the second volume we follow the fortunes of the new faith when the great men are succeeded by a great ecclesiastical organization. Henceforth it is within the rules and forms imposed upon it by this mighty organization that the Gospel has to find a footing and make its way among the populations of the ancient world. The free creative period, the period of the unfettered spirit, is succeeded by an age of anonymity in which institutions, dogmas and sacraments rise up and fill the place originally occupied by the great personalities of the first Christian generation. Many ecclesiastical historians have regarded the elaborate process which took place in the second century of incorporating the Gospel into a hard and fast group of institutions, forms and ceremonies, as a time of

decadence, and no doubt it stands immeasurably below the classic and creative age of primitive Christianity. But it must be remembered that the Christian institutions of sub-apostolic times were the direct and inevitable outcome of the conditions in which the new religion was placed; it was only in the garment of an ecclesiastical organization that the Gospel could retain its essential character and fight its battle with the opposing forces of Jewish and Pagan thought.

In the opening chapters of this volume Professor Wernle shows us how the successors of the primitive preachers of Christianity fell into disrepute among the Christian communities, and how these communities organized themselves into a Church resting on the basis of episcopacy. It is interesting to watch the rise of the bishop from a humble and subordinate place in the community to a position of dignity and power which ultimately makes him the centre of the new ecclesiastical system. In spite of having to face the somewhat formidable rivalry of ascetics, saints and martyrs, the pressure of circumstances within the community and outside of it as well lifted the bishops into the highest position in the Church, and determined the character of ecclesiastical institutions for centuries to come. After organizing itself from within, the Church was confronted from without by the three great forces of Judaism, Hellenism, and Gnosticism. Ecclesiastical theology

was to a large extent the outcome of the struggle of the Church with these rival forms of belief and life; and although the Church outwardly succeeded in overcoming its non-Christian rivals, it had to pay the price of victory by admitting many alien elements into the Christian creed. Judaism was conquered, but Jewish ecclesiasticism, Jewish ethics, Jewish apologetics, and Jewish apocalyptic fancies secured a home within the Church. Hellenism was conquered, but Greek religion furnished Christianity with some of its doctrines and mysteries, and Greek philosophy widened its horizon and supplied it with an apologetic and a conception of the world based on the ideas of reason and law. Gnosticism was crushed, but the Gnostics succeeded in introducing a scholastic conception of Christianity into the Church, in which the Christian faith was confounded with intellectual orthodoxy. All these points are brought out and illustrated by Dr Wernle in his excellent chapters on the rise of Ecclesiastical Theology. But the Christian religion at heart is not a code of beliefs nor a mere ecclesiastical organization; it is fundamentally a hope, a redemption, a life. After discussing the Theology of the New Testament in a chapter which does not appear in the first German edition, Professor Wernle appropriately closes his account of the Beginnings of Christianity with a lucid review of Christian piety in sub-apostolic times. We gather from this account that notwithstanding the changes

which the Christian faith had to undergo in the second century, the Gospel still remained a power in the individual life. But persecution produced hypocrites and apostates as well as martyrs. The rise of orthodoxy narrowed the original range of Christian love, and tended to confine it within the limits of the Church; but the Christian congregations, in spite of manifest defects, were superior to their heathen surroundings, and many individuals amongst them were earnestly endeavouring to realize the Christian ideal in their daily lives.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE author considers it advisable to direct attention to two points in which a slight difference exists between the first and second volumes. In the first volume the origin of the conception of the sacraments is derived from St Paul (p. 273), and not from the earliest Christian community; whereas vol. ii. presupposes the existence of the sacraments in the earliest Church, and even suggests that they are anterior to Christianity itself (vol. ii. p. 128). On this point the author has accepted the arguments advanced by Bousset and Heitmüller.

The first volume did not clearly settle the question whether, according to St Paul, all Christians attained salvation, or only a part of them (vol. i. p. 219 *seq.*, and p. 281), whereas the second volume presupposes that St Paul considered all the members of his congregation as the elect of God's mercy (vol. ii. p. 91). Here the author's doubts have been removed by studies of his own in later ecclesiastical history which has presented analogous cases. For the work as a whole these differences are of little importance, but the author begs his English readers to excuse the want of complete agreement between the two volumes.

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The Beginnings of Christianity.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH.

THE ORIGIN OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

The Decay of the Apostles and Prophets.

In the earliest age of Christianity the external constitution is of altogether secondary importance compared with the living personalities. The course of events was shaped by men whose names were well known and who were animated by a profound sense of their call. It is true that the congregations were gradually formed into an organization, but there was as yet nothing permanent about it: it was entirely under the influence of the Spirit. As to the personality of St Paul, the apostle by revelation, it eluded all attempts at inclusion under any organization whatever.

The great men died out, the stream of inspiration ran dry. Hence the change. We have here one of those facts which, while they explain everything else, do not themselves admit of explanation.

There is a great gap between the apostles and the bishops and teachers of the commencement of the second century. The picture of the aged apostle St John in Asia Minor is altogether fanciful, however much the later tradition knows about it. It is only with Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr that we emerge again from the tunnel into the daylight. In between lies the great anonymous period.

The organization of the itinerant preachers, men driven by the Spirit, did, it is true, resist the tendency to decay for a considerable time. But it is the rule in history, that institutions outlive the spirit that created them. After a long struggle it finally succumbed to the episcopal organization and to the catholic theology. The Catholic Church came into being in the course of this struggle. There is something tragic about it, as the vanquished, while representing the higher idea, are inferior to the victors in moral strength. The former are the prophets, the latter the priests and theologians.

The first missionary period had come to an end even before the close of the first century. We hear no more of the sending forth of new missionaries, of collections for them, of the founding of new congregations. Not that we are to infer from this that Christianity no longer spreads as rapidly as before. On the contrary, the extension of Christianity has only just begun, and there is a marked increase every decade. But there is all the difference in the world between the two methods. In the one case the Christian merchant or soldier carries the gospel message with him on his business journey, on his

day's march ; in the other, single congregations send out regularly appointed missionaries who evangelize in accordance with a carefully organized plan. The most important documents of this age, the Acts, the Pastoral epistles, the Fourth Gospel, show no missionary interest in their own time. The author of the Acts recounts the history of the first missions as something entirely past. He nowhere takes up the thread to continue his story and tell us something of the missions of his own day. The end of every incident is the appointment of presbyters, not the sending forth of new missionaries. Timothy is, it is true, called an evangelist in the Pastoral epistles, but his work consists entirely in the establishment of the congregations and the controversy with the heretical teachers. The founding of new congregations lies entirely beyond the horizon of the author of these letters. One might at first sight appear to have rather more justification in appealing to certain passages in the Fourth Gospel in support of the view that missionary work still continued. All that the author really says, however, is that the mission to the Samaritans and that to the Gentiles can both be traced back to Jesus Himself, and in so doing he offers an explanatory comment on the story in the Acts. His interest centres in the struggle with Judaism, but even so he cannot really be said to have the conversion of these Jews at heart, otherwise he would not have described the attitude of Jesus as so absolutely opposed to them, nor the Jews themselves as such perverse children of the devil. But the alterations introduced into the parable of the Good Shepherd are in themselves sufficiently

significant for the changed position of affairs. The Shepherd is no longer to go out to seek and to save the lost. His duty now, the duty of His successors, is simply to protect the fold from attacks.

The new task which is now laid upon the apostles and prophets is no longer the foundation of new congregations, but the welding together of the old ones. They continue to wander about preaching, but it is to fully organized Christian congregations. Decay sets in quite of itself, owing to the cessation of their real work as missionaries, with all the sacrifices and the privation which it involved. Want of discipline, mendicancy, trickery and charlatanism are increasingly prevalent amongst the itinerant preachers. They make use of their divine authority—he that receiveth you, receiveth God—to the damage of the congregations. These are the false prophets that come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. They boast of prophesying and casting out devils and work miracles in Jesus' name, and yet they are steeped in wickedness. They do not spare the flock of Christ, but, shameless beggars that they are, get what they can—silver and gold and raiment. Or they creep into houses and captivate women laden with sin and slaves to all kinds of passions. These few passages, taken from the first and third evangelist, and the Pastoral epistles, are well illustrated by the Didache and the eleventh commandment of Hermas. There the apostle is described as staying as long as possible in each congregation so as to take his ease in a comfortable berth, and then at his departure he gets himself furnished with plenty of provisions for the journey,

and if he can manage it, money as well. Or the prophet appears on the scene, falls into an ecstasy, orders a meal and consumes it cheerfully; or else he exclaims in rapt tones, "Give me money," and puts it into his pocket with a very solemn face. The people flock to the Christian prophet as though to a soothsayer. He is quick at understanding their questions and their wishes, and cuts his cloth after their measure. Of course he does nothing gratis. Thereupon he makes his public appearance, as impudent as ever, claims the seat of honour, insists upon being present at every festival and every meal; the only thing that he avoids is the public service of the Church. In the end there was no difference whatever between these Christian apostles and prophets and the Greek sophists and Oriental magicians. All the more urgent was the protection needed by the congregations against these impudent men of God. There must be some means of testing these gentry. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not everyone who speaks in ecstasy is a prophet, but only he who at the same time walketh in the way of the Lord." "By his deeds shall the true prophet be distinguished from the false." "Test the man who claims to have the Spirit of God by his life." The working of miracles soon falls into discredit. Doubt in the Holy Ghost, once the greatest of sins, now becomes a duty. In this crisis the apostolic order must have come to an end, whilst the prophets just managed to continue to exist. Discipline was restored first of all in the West.

A new and very serious danger arose through the appearance of the Gnostic heresy among the

itinerant preachers themselves. It began quite gradually and anonymously—the influence of certain foreign religions combined with tendencies originating in the Christian feeling of freedom. A strange and characteristic phraseology came into use: words such as "the higher knowledge," "superior wisdom," "completion of the teaching of the apostles," "progress and liberty." It was the itinerant preachers who now carried the new phraseology from place to place just as before they had disseminated the Gospel of Jesus. They are best known to us in Asia Minor. There was a prophetess at Thyatira—she is called Jezebel in the language of the Apocalypse—who recommended fornication and the eating of meats offered to idols as a means of arriving at the knowledge of the depths of Satan; while others, again, went about preaching asceticism, forbidding men to marry or to partake of certain articles of food, and appealing to the Old Testament as their authority, which they explained according to their own liking. Soon, too, dogmatic heresies took root and began to grow. Cerinthus appeared in Asia teaching that the creator of the world, the demiurge, was not the highest God and Saviour, but quite a subordinate being; and that the divine Christ who descended at baptism and returned to heaven before His death, must be sharply distinguished from the human Jesus. In the time of the Johannine letters we find people with a similar Christology travelling up and down the country as missionaries, and claiming to be inspired by the Spirit. Later on, when Ignatius visits the churches in Asia Minor, he is perpetually coming across traces of these sowers of tares. Ap-

pealing to their inspiration by the Spirit and under the pretext of a superior wisdom, they propagate Judaistic and Docetic heresies. Nor was the state of affairs very much better in other districts, especially in Egypt and Syria, where the Epistle of St Jude and the Didache note the presence of Gnostic heretics.

It was in consequence of this receptivity of the prophets for every kind of heretical spirit that new measures were taken to protect the congregations, and tests were set up of a dogmatic and ethical character. "Righteousness," "Faith and Love," "Jesus Christ come in the flesh"—such were some of the shibboleths by which all teachers were to be judged. Not everything that claims to be of the Spirit is of divine origin; it may also be due to the suggestion of demons, of Antichrist. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God." The only prophecy tolerated is that which conforms to the creed of the Church. We meet with such ecclesiastical prophets throughout the whole of the second century down to the Montanist controversy; nor can it be denied that they did the Church good service in the struggle against the Gnostics. But the spirit of the first age that set up and rejected free rules and canons had long ceased to find utterance in them.

Besides the two enemies, however, which have been already mentioned, there was yet a third, a formidable rival, which was bound finally to make an end of this order of itinerant preachers, and that was the constitution of the single congregations. The Church was now composed of a number of separate churches permanently established. No single prophet could

supervise all these churches any longer, or influence them by his spirit. Each congregation had its own officers, and they now began to protest against the outside interference of apostles in matters which they neither knew nor understood. Their protests were well founded. Autonomy was essential for the future development of the congregations in these troubled times of State persecution and Gnostic confusion, and had to be substituted for the former system of government from outside. In the third Epistle of St John we have a touching piece of evidence for the clash of the old with the new system of organization—touching, because the writer himself belongs to the old time, and is distressed as he contemplates the process of change. He has sent his messenger round to inquire as to the faith and love of the congregations. But a certain Diotrephes who wants to be first among them, declines to receive them, and expels those who wish to do so from the Church. But was this wicked Diotrephes so very much in the wrong, if he found that the messenger had no business at all in his congregation? The author of the Pastoral epistles and Ignatius were exactly of his opinion. The apostles and prophets come and stir up strife in the Church unnecessarily, they alienate the congregations from their bishop, they hold conventicles and start rival services. Elsewhere, in the Didache, the itinerant preachers and the officers of the congregations are still to be found working amicably together. The prophets and teachers are still honoured far more highly than the bishops and deacons: the former are looked upon as inspired, the latter are just elected officials. And yet the author of this legal document

is a warm advocate of the officials—"despise them not, for they are deserving of your respect together with the prophets and teachers"; while he sets up a perfect barricade of precautionary measures against the inspired evangelists. There is no doubt, therefore, which of the two will gain the upper hand in the future.

At Rome, again, we find altogether different conditions prevailing. The prophets had evidently never enjoyed the same esteem there as in the East, for even the end of the first century witnessed the episcopal organization with the principle of apostolic succession fully matured in all essentials. Here, too, there were prophets (Hermas), but if they did not prove obedient to the constitution, they were set aside as false prophets, relegated to obscurity, and so entirely degenerated. From the very first, order here prevailed over anarchy.

The diminished importance of the itinerant preachers and the decay of this institution brought about an important change in ecclesiastical terminology, at least in so far as the apostles are concerned. The title of 'Apostle' was reserved for the Twelve and St Paul; the other missionaries are no longer called apostles but evangelists. This altered use of words was accelerated by the historical fact that Paul was the only apostle for his congregations; he never calls his fellow-missionaries apostles. Perhaps he had them in view when, in the letter to the Ephesians, he introduces the term 'evangelist.' The new theory, however, that it was only in the first age, the age when the foundations were laid, that apostles existed, and that therefore the apostolic age is to

be distinguished from all later ages by the sole possession of this charisma, is entirely destitute of historical foundation, and is in contradiction with St Paul himself.

The passing away of the apostles and prophets was no event of merely secondary importance in the history of Christianity. It signified the end of inspiration. God ceased to speak directly through men. One main element in early Christianity—the Faith in a God that speaks and works in the present—had begun to decay.

CHAPTER II.

The Development of Episcopacy.

The question now arises, Who stepped into the place left vacant by the inspired leaders of the first age?

It was the presiding officials of the single congregations, whose duties were originally confined to the care of public worship, Priests and Levites according to Jewish conceptions. In the very earliest age of all, they were persons who came forward voluntarily, either men of substance who placed a room at the disposal of the community for the meetings and there supervised the discipline, or men of trust, in whose hands the offerings for the poor were placed for distribution. In his earlier letters St Paul calls them 'presidents' or 'workers.' In the letter to the Philippians, written not long before the apostle's death, they appear for the first time in the two divisions of overseers (bishops) and ministers (deacons). The apostolic age knows nothing as yet of an election and institution of these officials; it is only in the succeeding age that this becomes the rule. Presbyterial colleges appointed by election,

frequently at the suggestion of apostles and prophets who happen to be present, are the constant characteristic of the sub-apostolic age. Proofs for the existence of these colleges, which are as yet without any monarchical form of government, are to be found in almost all the writings of this period which have come down to us: the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Pastoral letters, 1st Peter, James, Clement, Polycarp, the Didache, Hermas. The titles which are used in these writings to designate the presidents of the colleges are very various. They appear now as 'overseers' (bishops), now as 'elders' (presbyters), now as 'shepherds,' and again as 'leaders,' nor can any appreciable difference be discovered in the use of these titles. The 'overseers' and 'elders' especially evidently designate the same persons; and a second conclusion which is equally certain is that the 'ministers' (deacons) are subordinate helpers of the overseers.

The work of the colleges was of a wide and all-embracing nature in the conduct of the communities' affairs generally. That is expressed by the words 'leaders,' 'shepherds,' 'presidents.' More especially, however, their activity may be considered under the three chief heads of the conduct of religious worship, the preservation of public order, the dispensation of social charities. The enumeration of the qualities required of the members of the colleges shows us better than anything else that their energies were concentrated in this direction. Sincerity, honesty, mildness, gentleness, are the chief characteristics that were looked for in them. Teaching and preaching formed at first the least part of a priest's work. The teachers

and the prophets were there for that purpose, and everyone was free to expound the word. But the struggle with Gnosticism brought about an entire change. In the Pastoral letters, the maintenance of sound doctrine—*i.e.*, of the apostolic tradition—against heresy comes to be the bishop's chief function. That is why it is so important that the bishop should be apt to teach, and that is why the teaching presbyters are to receive a double reward. In these passages one can still plainly trace the fact that teaching did not originally enter into a bishop's activities. Ignatius goes a good deal further. He would have nothing done without the bishop: every ecclesiastical act is to be submitted to him. Thus the scope of the bishop's office is gradually enlarged. Originally he is simply the president of a presbyterial council, finally he takes over all the functions of a prophet and an apostle, though, to be sure, only with the application of the principles of the division of labour and of strict subordination.

The increased dignity of these officials keeps pace with the development of their functions. Originally it was only the apostles and prophets that counted as the messengers of God's word and representatives of God and of Christ for the Church, whilst the bishops were the officials of the single congregations without any higher honour. Their exaltation to their new position of dignity was brought about in a threefold manner.

1. By the theory of apostolic succession. The way is paved for this theory by the Acts of the Apostles, which emphasizes the apostolic institution of the presbyters and makes Paul speak to the

presbyters at Miletus as though to his successors. Then it is regularly formulated by Clement of Rome (ch. 42–44). At the bottom of the theory lies the fact that the office of president goes back to the apostolic age; but it is just in the case of Rome that the principle does not apply, for the Roman Church was not an apostolic foundation. Clement is the first to draw up the line "God, Christ, the apostles, the elders," which gives the elders a share in the divine dignity by means of tradition. Similar thoughts of a succession are to be found in the Pastoral letters (St Paul's "gift"). At bottom this theory of apostolic succession forms a counterpart to that of the Jewish Rabbis; like this theory, it is of a legal nature and therefore especially comprehensible to the Romans.

2. By the theory of a special gift of the Spirit attached to the office. We find it first of all in the Pastoral epistles side by side with that of the apostolic succession. The two, in fact, run into each other as they did in the case of the Rabbis. The gift of the Spirit is made to depend upon the right succession. Amongst the Christians this theory was bound to strengthen the hands of the defence against the heretics and the prophets. For itinerant preachers and Gnostics alike appealed to "the Spirit." In order to check their extravagances it was now maintained that the Spirit was only to be found amongst the Church officials, not amongst the Gnostics, but—and this is the evil consequence of the theory—no longer amongst the congregation either. "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. For

God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness but of power, love, and discipline . . . . the 'good deposit' guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

The 'we' who have the Spirit are the officials of the Church alone. An Ignatius, it is true, felt himself to be inspired, for he believed himself entitled to boast of genuine visions; but then he tries to make his theory apply to all bishops, even to those who never had any inspiration of this kind. The only way in which the theory can gain the victory over enthusiasm and prophecy is by falsely proclaiming every bishop to be a prophet.

3. By the theory of the Old Testament priesthood. The first trace of it is to be found in the first Epistle of St Clement (ch. 40), where reference is made to the typical nature of the Israelite priesthood; but it may just as well have arisen in Egypt or Syria amongst the readers of the Didache—in fact, wherever the Old Testament was counted a sacred book of the law. There in the Old Testament they read of a clear and sharp distinction between clergy and laity—this is noticed even as early as Clement!—and of a hierarchy with different degrees of dignity. The type was endowed with creative power. The Didache, as is well known, furnishes other evidence of the great and commanding influence which the Old Testament exercised upon the congregations.

All three theories possessed the further advantage of being capable of combination. This is what actually occurred a little later. The bishops became the successors of the apostles, prophets, and priests. By the end of the first century the foundation of the whole system had been laid.

The first external consequence of the new dignity was that the bishops came to be paid. The author of the Acts still protests against the innovation: instead of copying those grievous wolves, the itinerant preachers, the bishops should learn of Paul to earn their livelihood by the labour of their own hands. In the province in which the Didache was written the prophets and teachers were paid rich contributions in kind; if no prophet was present, then it was the poor and not the bishops who benefited thereby. Such was the original practice. The author of the Pastoral epistles has quite a different opinion on this point:—"The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits. Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things." All this is as yet very mysterious and cautious. The later letter is less enigmatic: "Let the elders that rule well [not all therefore indiscriminately] be counted worthy of double honour [*i.e.* be paid], especially those who labour in the word and in teaching [for they have less time to devote to their own business]. For the Scripture saith, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn,' and 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.'" Evidently the payment of bishops is still an innovation which is not to be risked without due limitations, and has to be supported by passages from Scripture. It helped to increase the professional feeling of the clergy.

Our earliest authority for the monarchical episcopate and the threefold ministry—bishops, presbyters, and deacons—is Ignatius (110–120 A.D.), and that only for Antioch in Syria and for Asia Minor. In

other places—*e.g.*, in Rome or Philippi—it must have arisen a little later. But no account of its origin has reached us. It is altogether improbable that it was preceded by struggles within the presbyteral council. Episcopacy prevailed, and that after a peaceful fashion, because it found itself the best weapon against the itinerant preachers and the best centre of ecclesiastical unity. Perhaps the process of development was simply this, that the earlier office of president came to be held for life instead of, as before, in succession temporarily.

But what reception was accorded the new constitution by the congregations? As far as they were ecclesiastically minded, they viewed it with favour. It was a time of struggle and of persecution—the Church needed strong and skilful leaders. There was, however, naturally some diversity of opinion, and many old and young Christians sympathized with the itinerant preachers. Evidence of this may be found in the Third Epistle of St John. But the more perfect organization won the day.

Thus, then, the Church had received its new leaders. Those who a short while previously had been merely occupied with the public services, now found themselves suddenly at the head of the whole spiritual life. Religious gifts were less looked for in these men than energy and a practical turn of mind. The more serious Christians, however, made it a matter of anxious concern that the bishop should be of an exemplary moral life. The man who did more than all others to increase their authority—the author of the Pastoral epistles—took the utmost pains at the same time to further the improvement

of their moral condition. He found them in a state of degradation and sluggish degeneracy. He instigated the first reform of the clergy. He demanded that the bishop should be apt to teach. This aptitude, however, was not to be obtained compulsorily, and yet the intellectual development of the congregation depended upon it.

The Formation of the Office of Teacher in the Catholic Church.

Of the three most important personalities of the apostolic age, the apostle, the prophet and the teacher, the last-named alone subsists in sub-apostolic times, and that not without having traversed a serious crisis. There were some critical moments when the Christian teacher, too, threatened to degenerate into the talkative and controversial Sophist. Hence the warning in the Epistle of St James: "I do not want many of you, my brothers, to become teachers, knowing as you do that we who teach shall be judged by a more severe standard than others." The author of the Pastoral epistles would prefer to merge the office of teacher entirely in that of bishop, and looks with suspicion upon all freelances. His demands, however, were pitched too high. The bishops could guarantee the true doctrine of others, but they could never take up the calling of teachers themselves; they had far too much practical work in hand for that. The problem was solved by placing the teachers henceforward under episcopal control. They had to subscribe to the creed, but otherwise they had complete liberty of teaching, *i.e.*, as far as the ecclesiastical authorities were concerned. We only

meet with such teachers, it is true, about the middle of the second century: Aristides at Athens, Justin at Ephesus and Rome, Tatian at Rome and in Syria. The two latter are great travellers, recalling the teachers' earlier mode of life, the old itinerancy. They defended the Christian faith against heathen philosophers, Jewish Rabbis, and Christian Gnostics. For the Gnostics, too, had their celebrated teachers, and they were earlier in the field than their orthodox opponents: Basilides, Valentinus, Kerdon, Marcion, all of whom likewise travelled about from place to place. Of the catholic teachers in Justin's time, we know that they taught gratuitously (Justin himself had taken an unceremonious leave of the peripatetic philosopher because he had demanded money for his lessons). They had therefore to look to the congregations for their means of subsistence. This is confirmed by the Didache.

The great anonymous period of the teacher's office extends from the age of Apollos to that of Justin. Anonymity is really its characteristic feature; the names of Catholic and Gnostic teachers alike have completely vanished. The literature, however, that has come down to us from the anonymous teachers of the Church is of considerable extent. It includes, amongst other writings, the Catholic Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Gospels (except that of Mark), the Pastoral epistles, Barnabas, the Didache. Of the ecclesiastical authors, besides the bishops, we are only acquainted with an evangelist, Mark, one prophet, Hermas, and Aristion, to whom the spurious conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel may possibly be ascribed.

There are also very many pseudonymous writings amongst the products of the literary activity of the catholic teachers. The Gospels, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the letter known as that of St Barnabas, are the only works which begin without any name whatever. The whole of the remaining literature claims to be apostolic. And this is one of the clearest proofs that we have reached an age of decline. These teachers feel their inferiority. Their names carry no weight, they possess no authority. It is only by prefixing the names of the apostles to their letters (which, moreover, are letters in name only, mere literary fabrications) that they gain any hearing. A parallel to this ecclesiastical usurpation of apostolic authority is to be found in the constant appeal to secret apostolic tradition by the Gnostics.

Thus the fathers of the later catholic office of teachers are anonymous persons who acquired a standing, not by their own personal influence, but only by the assumption of spurious titles—a kind of necromancy. It was they who laid the foundations of the later catholic theology. They were the spiritual leaders of the Church in the greatest crisis which the Church ever traversed, and the Church's safe emergence from that crisis is to be ascribed to them and to the bishops.

CHAPTER III.

The Order of the Saints.

As long as there were apostles and prophets they were the *homines religiosi*, the representatives of ecstasy and exaltation, and of all that was extraordinary. They were the incarnation of the enthusiastic impulse, of that excess of zeal, love and energy which could find no room in the everyday life. This impulse had to discover a new outlet when the order of the apostles and of the prophets succumbed to the altered circumstances of the times. The Christian life was too abnormal, too vehement, too volcanic to find full satisfaction in the office of bishop or of teacher, and in the ordinary layman's piety. There must be saints to set a goal to the longing of the deepest natures, to whom the masses could look up and venerate as heroes. They are the successors of the apostles and the prophets in the abnormal manner of their lives, though not in their historical calling. They do not represent anything distinctively Christian; they belong rather to the universal history of religion than to the history of the Gospel.

Who are the saints of the sub-apostolic age? First

of all come the martyrs. It was a time of struggle, and they died a hero's death for their Redeemer. Even in the Apocalypse they occupy the first rank. It is of them that the writer is thinking when he praises the great multitude who have come out of the great tribulation, who have conquered in the strength of the Lamb: they are the first to rise from the dead and to live and reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom. One is mentioned by name, the martyr of Pergamos, Antipas the faithful witness. The Apocalypse itself is intended as an invitation to martyrdom: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth" [*i.e.*, as martyrs]; "yea, saith the spirit, they shall rest from their labours; for their works follow with them."

Other writings celebrate the martyrs of past ages as saints, so the Epistle to the Hebrews. The catalogue of the men of faith—the cloud of witnesses—is closed with the martyrs. The author enumerates every variety of death and terror. "Some were crucified, others had trial of mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, tortured, sawn asunder; they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, evil-intreated, of whom the world was not worthy." That applies to the martyrs of the Jewish Church, but it shows how Christian enthusiasm was kindled by such fancies. The Acts of the Apostles celebrates the apostles as martyrs. Nothing but his martyrdom is related of James, and not much more of Stephen. St Peter and St Paul are heroes of suffering. But the fatal termination is by no means the most important part

of a martyrdom. The most famous cases are those when the hero is rescued from the greatest danger by a divine miracle: Peter in prison, Paul at Lystra and at Philippi. The first Epistle of St Clement refers to the two apostles St Peter and St Paul, who died the martyr's death. "To whom were added a great number of the elect, who, suffering many torments and much dishonour through jealous enmity, gave us thereby a most excellent example." The "Shepherd" of Hermas, written in a time of persecution, is especially instructive. In his vision the prophet is about to seat himself on the right hand of the woman that appears to him, but she refuses to give him this seat of honour; it belongs to the martyrs alone who have endured scourgings and imprisonment, great plagues, crucifixion and wild beasts for the sake of the Name. It is true, however, that the same third vision afterwards mentions only the martyrs in the second place, namely, after the apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons. The martyr is accordingly to rank above the prophets but below the bishops, which points to the first beginnings of disputes as to precedence. Martyrdom is already reckoned as so high a merit, quite in itself and apart from the rest of the Christian life, that Hermas feels himself compelled to enter the lists against this exaggerated estimate of its value. To certain martyrs or confessors he declares: "Had ye not suffered for the name of the Lord, ye had been as dead in the sight of God because of your sins." At the same time he declares that martyrdom procures forgiveness of sins for all men. Such were the views of the Church at Rome. The martyrdom of Polycarp and the Ignatian letters show us how far

more highly martyrdom was esteemed in the East than the episcopal office, for both Polycarp and Ignatius were bishops. So we read in the martyrdom of Polycarp. "We pray to Christ as to the Son of God, but we love the martyrs as the disciples and followers of the Lord." Ignatius, who has so lofty a consciousness of his episcopal office, declares that it is only now, in martyrdom, that he begins to be a true disciple of Jesus. It is only the martyr who in the strict sense of the word follows the steps of Jesus. The high esteem, therefore, in which these martyred saints were held had consequences of a directly political nature for the surviving confessors. They were considered to be inspired in an extraordinary degree—according to Jesus' promise that the Spirit should be their advocate when they should be delivered up for judgment—and so they came to be the rivals of the bishops.

The ascetics formed the second class of the saints. 1 Cor. vii. and the enigmatic and uncertain saying of Jesus concerning those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake in Matt. xix. led many in very early times to attach a superior sanctity to the single state. This form of asceticism was reckoned as the token of an especial charism. Separate orders of virgins and of widows came into being. The author of the Lucan writings helps to exalt and to glorify them by his enthusiastic description of the widow Hannah and of the virgin Tabitha. By the time when the Pastoral letters were written the honourable title of widow must have been very grossly misused. Not only was greater sanctity attached to it, but considerable support was assigned

to the widows by the congregations. Thereupon widows with large families of children presented themselves for admission into the sacred order, or quite young widows whose secret intention was to marry again. The energetic manner in which the author sets about the reform and reduction of the order of widows is very entertaining. He is fighting at the same time for the episcopal authority, upon which these holy ladies often trench. From the very first the ascetic was the natural rival of the bishop. He had the greater sanctity, the bishop the greater dignity. If the ascetic began to boast into the bargain, then strife was scarcely to be avoided. "The ascetic is not to boast"—the words of warning come to us from a document of the first century—"for he knows that it is not from himself that he has received the strength to be continent." Bishop Ignatius writes to Bishop Polycarp still more uncompromisingly: "If a man possesses the power to remain continent then he shall refrain from vaunting in honour of the body of the Lord [*i.e.*, of the Church]. If he vaunts, then he is lost; and if he is accounted more highly than the bishop, then he has utterly perished." That sounds like the motto for the great war that was to be waged for centuries between the official position and the holy life, between the bishop and the monk. The esteem in which the ascetic life was held was still further increased by certain mystic tendencies: the marriage with Christ did not appear to be quite capable of realization save in the case of the unmarried. Then there was the loathing felt for the only too familiar heathen life of impurity, together with various forms of the late-Jewish and foreign aver-

sion to nature. Even at this early date asceticism was exalted to the highest honour in current legends. Abundant proof of this statement can be found in the Acts of the virgin Thecla, in almost all the apocryphal Acts of Apostles, and in the Gospel of Mary. Entire continence is everywhere accounted the higher and truer form of Christianity. No wonder that the bishop fell into disrepute and that the episcopal author of the Pastoral epistles inveighs loudly against those emissaries of the devil who forbid marriage. In the eyes of a great portion of the Christian community the ascetics appeared to be the only people who had seriously set out in quest of the ideal of the Gospel.

The beginnings of the voluminous literature of hagiology can be traced back to the end of the first century. The series is begun by the Gospels; Jesus Himself appears in them as the first of the saints, though He is, it is true, at the same time the messenger of the clear Word of God. The various Acts of the Apostles follow next; they reflect the ideal of popular piety. The men of God are there depicted as converters of the heathen, as workers of miracles, as ascetics, and as martyrs. It is possible that our canonical book of the Acts is the first of this group of literary productions. But the editor reproduces the legend of the saints with an ecclesiastical bias and writes as a conscious advocate of episcopal authority. In the apocryphal writings, on the contrary, the saint is pourtrayed without any ecclesiastical coloring. They are the last products of the dying enthusiasm. Human and divine here melt into one; the miraculous forms the rule, the ordinary the excep-

tion. The tendency is throughout ascetic and anti-social, but secular interests claim their due in the romantic form in which they are composed. At bottom all these saints are, after all, caricatures of Jesus and of His great successor.

Thus equipped with bishops, theologians and saints, the Church goes forward to meet the problems of the new age. There were no longer any great personalities with an immediate divine calling. That is not the fault of the Church. The time now came when second-rate characters and talents were strong enough to find a place for the new religion in the world and to preserve it from entire destruction therein.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH'S THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.

CHAPTER IV.

The Jewish Faith.

It was only the Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. that finally effected the external breach between Jews and Christians. It was now clear to all Christians that the mission of Jesus and the apostles to Israel had been in vain, and had not stayed the judgment of God. The fulfilment of Jesus' prophecies, the wrath of God poured out upon Jerusalem as a punishment for the murder of Jesus — such seemed (to all Christians) to be the meaning of the terrible events which had just taken place, for everyone who could read the signs of the times. And while these convictions were gaining ground among the Christians, the authors of the Apocalypse of Baruch and of Ezra were pouring forth their lamentations for the desolation of the holy land and the destruction of the holy city. Something was gradually settling down between Jews and Christians, something of greater weight than theological differences. A rift in thought and

feeling was gradually broadening, which removed every possibility of mutual understanding. The same event called forth rejoicing and contentment in the one camp and dismay in the other.

The Jews retaliated first of all by the expulsion of all Christians from membership in the synagogues. Everyone that espoused the cause of Jesus was immediately excommunicated with the most terrible curses. The passage in St Luke's Gospel alludes to this where it is written: "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company and reproach you and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake." A nice illustration is also to be found (in the Fourth Gospel) in the story of the man that was born blind. This man was cast out of the assembly, "for the Jews had agreed that if any man should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."

A further step was taken when the Christians were denounced to the Roman governors under the pretext of being politically dangerous. The Jews were the principal instigators in the persecution of Christians that now began; it was they who sowed broadcast the accusations of revolt, innovation and conspiracy, and thrust Christianity from them as an "illegal religion." The Lucan writings contain a series of such denunciations: "Jesus perverted the people, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He Himself is Christ a king." "The Christians have turned the world upside down; they act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." It is true that, according to the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, these accusa-

tions usually fell flat. The Roman governors were too wise and just not to turn a deaf ear to such fabrications. So it should have been, but such was not the actual state of affairs. We know, on the contrary, that in consequence of Jewish denunciations the Christians were condemned as innovators and revolutionaries dangerous to the well-being of the State. Even the Apocalypse couples the denunciation of the Jews and the persecution of the Christians together. The martyrdom of Polycarp is the best instance that we possess of the fierce hatred which the Jews nourished against the Christians. The voices of Jews mingle with those of the heathen multitude and clamour for the execution of Polycarp; then, "as usual," they drag the wood up to the stake, and finally they try to hinder the body from being handed over to the Christians. Political denunciation was, however, only one of the weapons which the Jews employed; the other, equally effective, was the defamation of the moral character of Jesus and the Christians, the wholesale dissemination of all those calumnious reports concerning the birth of Christ, the theft of His body after His death, and the like, against which St Matthew's Gospel already feels bound to protest. The whole story of Jesus was travestied and vulgarized, and thus exposed to the mockery of the educated classes. Although Justin's report of an official mission of Jewish calumniators soon after Jesus' death is legendary, there was a basis of fact upon which his supposition was built. The philosopher Celsus appears to have been acquainted with a Jewish pamphlet full of aspersions upon the Christians. He despises it

himself, but for all that he enjoys making use of it. Thus, then, the Jews did their utmost to root out the Christians, and the wild hatred which these latter conceived for them was not altogether unmerited.

The influence of Judaism upon Christianity would never have been of any consequence had the combatants confined themselves to these brutal methods of warfare. But from very early times controversy was employed as well as calumny. Thus the teachers of the two religions engaged in learned disputations, which naturally scarcely ever had any practical results, but did not fail to exercise a considerable influence upon men's minds. The earliest picture of such a disputation is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles. The record of the speeches and of the argumentation of St Stephen and of St Paul affords us at the same time an insight into the circumstances of a later age. Next, we have the disputes of Jesus with the Jews at Jerusalem, contained in the Fourth Gospel. Here the author simply carries back into the life of Jesus the wranglings between Jews and Christians of his own day. Lastly, in his dialogue with the Jew Trypho, Justin gives us the outline of a regular disputation, of course in a Christian light. This work of Justin's compensates in a measure for the loss of the older disputation between Jason and Papiscus, of which Aristo of Pella is said to have been the author. Justin's dialogue is in any case an authority of the highest value if we would determine, not only the outer procedure in such a disputation, but also the apologetic methods in detail. Other anti-Jewish writings, such as the Epistle to

the Hebrews and that of Barnabas, afford us additional valuable information.

If we ask, what was the subject of this controversy and what were the main points in the dispute, then we must be prepared to find that the specific differences between the Christian and the Jew had not been grasped at all by either party in the theological dispute. For in reality two completely different types or species of religion stood opposed to each other, and they could only be contrasted as wholes: it was not a question of single dogmas or customs; the point at issue was the entire relation of man to God. Does man claim to be God's child, or is he His slave? Are love and joy to prevail in him, or is it fear? Which is important in God's sight—the abiding in the three realities, or a hundred secondary matters? The answer to these fundamental questions was that which really differentiated the Christian from the Jew. But even in the earliest Christian Church the subject of controversy was less the new element in religion than the dogma of the Messiah. Could it be applied to Jesus in spite of His death or not? This dispute began the process whereby the fundamental points of difference were obliterated and obscured. Then, in addition to this, there came in, through Paul, the strife concerning the law. Paul sets up a sharp antithesis —the law or Jesus Christ. Here was at any rate a faint glimmering of the truth. It is because Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man and the barrier of the law no longer exists for the Christian, that His religion is of a totally different nature—it is the glorious liberty of the children of God. St Paul had indeed a profounder conception

of the superiority of Christianity than any other man. But for the succeeding age the resulting difference is a merely external one. Compared with the Jews the Christians have at once lost and gained. They have lost the burden of the ceremonial law, they have gained the faith in Jesus the Messiah. In other words, the life of the Christians has become easier, their faith a harder matter. The expression of the comparison with their opponents could hardly have been less felicitous. Matters were made worse by the constant attempt of the Christian apologetic to transform the absolute antithesis between the law and Christ, such as St Paul had proclaimed it, into a merely relative difference whereby Christ was discovered everywhere in the Jewish Book, even in the law, and validity was claimed for the law, even in the Christian Church, only in a modified sense. The belief in Christ was itself to prove to be something Jewish and of extreme antiquity; and, on the other hand, the law was to be a revelation which only the Christians were able to read aright. By this apologetic device they deprived themselves of the very possibility of understanding the peculiar characteristics of Christianity and its superiority over Judaism. Nor is this the only occasion on which apologetics, instead of bringing light, have darkened counsel.

We have now to give an outline of the Christological controversy between the Jews and the Christians and the Christological apologetics of the latter. The starting-point was the question: Is Jesus the Messiah expected by the Jews or not? But since St Paul had created an entirely new Christology—the Son of God from heaven, the mediator

of creation and of revelation in the Old Testament—this speculation had also to be defended against the Jews.

Here were two things as far as the poles asunder —Jewish eschatological doctrines and new Christian speculations. The dialogue with Trypho (ch. 48) shows conclusively that the difference between Jews and Christians was clearly realized. Trypho says, that Jesus should be the Messiah is paradoxical, but to assert that He pre-existed as God and then became man in a supernatural fashion, is "not only paradoxical but foolish," whereupon Justin admits that the proof of the second statement is rather more difficult.

First of all, it had to be proved that Jesus was the Messiah. This was in reality no easy task, seeing that Jesus had eliminated nearly all that was Jewish from the conception of the Messiah and referred His disciples to the future for the little that remained. But the difficulty was no longer felt. It was maintained that Jesus had been acknowledged as the Jewish Messiah while He lived on earth. The chief rock of offence was now, as ever, His death, which the Jews interpreted as punishment for wrongdoing. Hence the greatest part of this Messianic theology is apologetics for the death of Jesus. The Resurrection there appears as evidence of restitution, and is itself defended by an ever-lengthening chain of proofs. When the Jews persisted in spreading abroad the report of the theft of the body of Jesus, the Christians invented the story of the watch and the sealing of the grave by way of refutation. The legends concerning the miraculous occurrences at the death of Jesus were

in like manner furnished with the evidence of eye-witnesses, and completed the story of the Resurrection.

The proof from prophecy was intended to remove any further objections that might be entertained. In the first place, prophecies of Jesus Himself were fulfilled in the story of the Passion—there was a whole series of detailed predictions and of symbolical actions, from which the inference was to be drawn that He did not bow before superior force but died of His own free will. Next, the whole of the Old Testament was interpreted as the book of the death of the Messiah, not merely Isa. liii., but all the sacrifices and laws of the trespass offering, all the lamentations of the Psalmists, the sacrifice of Isaac, the scarlet thread of Rahab the harlot, the brazen serpent in the wilderness, the hands of Moses uplifted crosswise in the battle against the Amalakites, and so forth. Nothing was too recondite to deter them. Barnabas writes with the greatest equanimity, "The red heifer in Numbers xix. is the Lord Jesus." The later evangelists, especially St Matthew and St John, are careful to note the exact fulfilment of single prophecies in the history of the Passion. "In order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, I thirst."

The last recourse of apologetics was the proof of the voluntariness of Jesus' sufferings. He could have asked God to send Him legions of angels, but He would not. If by the mere utterance of the words "I am He" He made His enemies fall to the ground, how easily might He have escaped from them. His life was His own to give or to keep, and if He gave it, then it was for our sakes and that the scripture

might be fulfilled. Finally, the different legends about Judas were proofs of the judgment of God upon the traitor, and that was succeeded by the terrible revelation of His wrath upon the murderers and their city. More abundant proof could not be required of any apologetics. In the Gospels we can still see quite clearly how the apologetic narrative gradually increases in intensity. Mark always begins the series, Matthew and John always come last. In the same manner an ever-lengthening chain of Old Testament proof stretches from the Acts over John and Barnabas to Justin. The Christian teachers carefully preserved their store of apologetic arguments and handed it on with further additions. But their line of defence was after all pitiably weak, and the Jews broke through it and came out victorious in the end. The Christians admitted that Jesus' death destroys His claim to be the Messiah, if it were not that. . . . The want of taste in the reasoning is of little moment compared with the far more serious wantonness with which passages were altered, perverted, or invented by the apologists. They inserted glosses of greater or less extent in several passages of the Old Testament (Son of God, Wood, etc.), and thereby rendered themselves liable to the charge of forgery. Nor was it any blessing for Christianity if, thanks to this apologetic of theirs, importance was attached even more exclusively than heretofore to the death of Jesus.

The rest of the history was, however, not entirely neglected. Difficulties had to be removed and further proofs of the Messiahship furnished. The doctrine of Jesus' Davidic descent was maintained in

spite of Jesus' answer to the Scribes, and in spite of the story of the miraculous birth—now just beginning to appear among the Gentile Christians—which of course invalidates this argument. Barnabas alone rejects the descent from David in favour of the divine Sonship. A consequence of the Davidic descent was the postulate of the birth in Bethlehem (cp. Matt. ii. 5 and John vii. 42), which was clearly contradicted, however, by the fact that Jesus came from Nazareth. The postulate was transformed into history. The first evangelist shows us how it came about that Jesus, who had been born at Bethlehem, grew up at Nazareth, and the third explains how it was that the parents of Jesus, who were settled at Nazareth, came to have their child at Bethlehem.

Galilee was, however, still the land of darkness. Can the Messiah come from Galilee? The first evangelist has recourse to the prophecy of Isaiah—the light of the Messiah is to spring up in Galilee. The fourth evangelist simply transfers the scene of Jesus' activity to Jerusalem in order that every reproach of Jesus having taught in a corner and in secret might be removed. This apologetic transformation of the life of Jesus equals in boldness the transference of His birthplace. One other apparent obstacle to the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah had to be surmounted—the baptism of Jesus by John, for surely the Baptist is the greater, and the baptized is even a sinner. To counterbalance these inferences the first evangelist inserted the conversation in the course of which the Baptist humbles himself before Jesus; the third placed the Baptist in an inferior position through his previous history; the fourth made the

Baptist to be the first publicly to confess the Son of God that came down from heaven to reconcile the world; and lastly, Justin proved that the Jewish doctrine of the anointment of the Messiah by Elijah had been fulfilled in the baptism of Jesus. In a similar manner we find that Jewish objections have had to be taken into account in very many places in the Gospel tradition. Although the Gospel of St Mark was itself inspired by a most enthusiastic faith and intended to awaken a like faith, it proved to be the source of considerable perplexity to later writers, for its author had evidently under-estimated the keenness of his adversaries' perceptions. With an entire absence of suspicion he lets the men of Nazareth speak of Jesus' trade as a carpenter, and tells us how Jesus' own relations once took Him to be mad. He had shown Jesus' powers to be subject to limitation on all sides, even in the moral sphere. He will not suffer Himself to be called good; He knows neither the day nor hour of the Parousia; nor can He dispose of the places in the kingdom of heaven. He is repeatedly compelled to have recourse to questions. He asks the name of the demon, inquires who it was that caused power to go forth from Him by touching Him; or again, He would know the subject of the disciples' conversation, and the duration of the epileptic's malady. Even His miraculous power is limited. At one time He can do no miracles. At another all the sick are brought to Him, and He heals, not all, but many; He cannot make the blind man to see immediately; the deaf He heals, but with many sighs. When He is asked to confirm His position by giving a sign He

refuses. Whilst these are the very features for the sake of which we, at this present day, ascribe the greatest historical accuracy to St Mark, his oldest Christian readers were greatly distressed by so many obvious defects in the picture of Jesus, which afforded such convenient points of attack for scornful adversaries, at first Jewish, and later Greek as well. Every later evangelist, Matthew, Luke and John, is therefore very eager to remove such rocks of offence, either through simply omitting them or by correcting them or by smoothing them away by means of explanation; and yet, as the criticism of the Jew in Celsus, and as Celsus himself shows us, more than sufficient points of attack remained. For us this is a great comfort. We sometimes fear lest the true figure of Jesus is lost to us because of the draperies in which it has been shrouded, and His true features hopelessly obscured because of the successive layers of colours under which they lie concealed. Here we have a proof that a real human being, and no mere product of faith, is speaking to us.

The main question still remained unanswered as before: Does the life of Jesus as a whole give one the impression that He was the Messiah? Originally the Christians universally shared the belief that Jesus had yet to come as Messiah. The Messianic glory had not yet been revealed in Him. It was only the return of Jesus and the 'advent of Messiah' that was to furnish the full Messianic proof. But in the course of the controversy with the Jews, and under the influence of the Pauline conception of the Son of God who had already appeared, the proof began to be attempted that Jesus was the Messiah who had

already come, and not the one whose coming had still to be expected. The task was an impossible one. Jesus' life was marked so clearly by the characteristics of a lowly origin, of suffering, of want, of distance from God. What proof could here be found of the Messianic glory in the Jewish sense of the word? All the national prophecies had evidently not been fulfilled by Him.

The Christian apologists sought to surmount the difficulty in two mutually exclusive ways. The first, and the more honest, was the artificially constructed theory of the twofold advent of the Messiah—one in humiliation, one in glory. The first traces of this theory are to be found in the Lucan writings, where we have the explanation—first the suffering and then the glory. It is completed in Barnabas and in Justin, together with the proofs from the Old Testament. On the great day of Atonement there were two he-goats resembling each other, according to the Rabbinical theory; just so the Jesus of the second advent will be like the Jesus murdered by the Jews. This theory possessed one great advantage: the story of Jesus could be taken as it was in reality. But then the chief proof had to be deferred to the uncertain future.

Hence the origin of the opposite theory. The Messianic glory was manifested during Jesus' earthly life. The first evangelist goes a long way to meet it with his great proof from miracles (ch. viii.–ix.), and the proof from prophecy throughout the whole of his book. One who possessed such miraculous powers, and in whom so many prophecies were fulfilled, was the Messiah in the fulness of His glory. He needed

not to be baptized, He needed not to die. Characteristic, too, is the omission of the words, "Why callest thou Me good?" And yet all that this evangelist does, is a very modest beginning compared with the total transformation of the life of Jesus, effected in the Fourth Gospel in the interests of the Messianic theory. "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" This exclamation of the Jews might serve as a motto for the whole book. The evangelist's aim is the proof that Jesus was the Christ during His life on earth, and not in the future only. The future Parousia of Christ is an entirely subsidiary consideration: he has something better to offer than consolation by means of a hope that is still to be realized. Behold the Messiah, who has come in the full glory of God. The mighty miracles, the changing of the water into wine, the healing of the man who had been lame for thirty-eight years, and of the man born blind, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the raising of Lazarus after three days—they are all signs of the Messiahship of Jesus, the revelation of His Messianic glory; for they are all of them wonders, such as could only be expected to occur in the Messianic age. This Messiah possessed sinlessness, omniscience and omnipotence upon earth. Jesus' death was voluntarily a proof of His love. How could anyone fail to believe that He was the Messiah? To meet the demand of the Rabbis, who were for ever clamouring for testimonies, authoritative proofs, the fifth chapter of the Gospel furnishes a whole concatenation of proofs—the testimony of John, the wonders, the voice of God, the Old Testament. Then again he investigates the

difficult questions whether the testimony of Jesus to Himself is valid or not, and decides that it is, because Jesus' testimony carries greater weight than that of any man, His knowledge being subject to no limitations, and as it is always accompanied by the testimony of God, it fulfils the requirement of the law that testimony shall be in the mouth of two witnesses. Hence furthermore, as a natural consequence, the Messianic judgment was executed by the mere appearance of Jesus, and the Messianic gift of everlasting life was imparted by Jesus; for the presence of the Messiah implies judgment and everlasting blessedness. John was merely the apologist who consistently drew all the consequences from the proposition that Jesus was the Messiah. Had it depended upon him, the Christians might entirely have discarded the proof from the Parousia while retaining the hope in the Parousia itself. But the Church did not accept this theory. It was rejected even by as early a writer as Justin. The impression of Jesus' lowly life left by the Synoptic Gospels was too strong and the hope in the Parousia too important for the great mass of the Christians. The only theory which held its ground was that of the double Parousia. This did not imply, however, the rejection of the Christ of glory as He appeared in the Johannine Gospel. For the Gentiles especially the evangelist thereby furnished a proof that God had appeared upon earth. Thus, then, while John did not attain his proximate aim by his unsparing idealization of history—that is to say, the refutation of the Jews—he did make a deeper impression upon the Greeks than he would have done otherwise. John himself is

in reality perfectly well aware that however many testimonies he may gather, his arguments do not carry conviction to any learned Jew. He alone that has the Spirit can understand the Christian doctrine, can recognise that the death of Jesus was a judgment, not upon the Crucified, but upon the devil, and that the Old Testament is full of types of the death of Jesus. That is the conclusion of every controversy.

Jesus had not been the Messiah of the Jews. The whole artificial series of proofs brought forward by the Christians simply corroborates this assertion. All that they advance is figment, feint and fabrication. No single Christian had the courage to tell the Jews straight out: Jesus was not that which you wish Him to be, because He was something a great deal better.

There were, of course, many Christians to whom the title of Messiah did not imply very much, though that which they substituted for it was in no wise better. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews belongs to this class. Although he calls Jesus Christ he knows practically nothing of the Messianic theology, and therefore the Jewish Alexandrine school of thought to which he belongs attached no importance to this doctrine. His favourite book is the Pentateuch, which makes no mention of the Messiah. When he wishes to picture Jesus clearly to himself and the Jewish readers of the Bible he can only do so by means of the types and conceptions of the Pentateuch. Hence he derives his favourite idea, Jesus the high priest according to the order of Melchisedec.

His letter is addressed to Christians, but to such as

are deeply impressed by Judaism. Christianity—so some of these Christians would say to each other—is a poor and insignificant kind of faith. It is for ever putting us off with hopes for the future which are never realized, whilst Judaism has its divine institutions in the present. They were jealous of the ecclesiastical privileges of Judaism, just as so many Protestants secretly envy Rome her prerogatives. Israel had angels as mediators of the covenant, it had its public worship and its divinely ordained priesthood, and derived the certainty of its future salvation from these actual guarantees. The simple fact that the war of the year 70 A.D. had swept away the Church of Israel did not cause these Christians to waver in their partiality for Judaism. They believed the sacred book more than the actual present.

The usual result of apologetics can be traced in our author. Instead of brushing these preposterous objections aside he takes them into consideration and really tries to prove that the Christians possess the better Church with a higher ritual and priesthood. It was an amazing undertaking. The method employed was to apply the Pentateuch to Jesus. But Jesus was not of Aaron's line, and had He been He would but have been the equal of the Jewish high priests. So our Christian author selects the figure of Melchisedec, naturally incited thereto by the 110th Messianic psalm, which had for a long time past been interpreted in a Christian sense. He need trouble himself as little about the Jesus of history as St Paul or the author of the Apocalypse. It is sufficient for him to identify Jesus with the high priest Melchisedec in order to undermine the foundations on

which the prerogatives of Israel rest. Melchisedec hereby does our author the same good turn that Abraham had done St Paul. He furnishes the proof from antiquity. As high priest after the order of Melchisedec, Christ is older than Levi and Aaron. The whole Jewish priesthood paid tithes and did reverence to Melchisedec in the person of their ancestor Abraham. It is one of the pleasant little ironies of history that the very character which had been invented by the Jews for the express purpose of investing Jerusalem with a halo of magnificence in a remote antiquity, should now be used as the lever whereby all Jewish prerogatives were overthrown.

Starting from this figure, our author proves on the one hand the similarity of Christ to the Jewish high priests, but above all, the difference that exists between them and His superiority over them. The priests of Aaron are many, Jesus one; they are the sinful, He the sinless; they worship in the temple made with hands, He in the heavenly temple; they make atonement to God year by year, He once; they with the blood of bulls and calves, He with His own. In all this clever trifling it does not of course matter that Jesus is explained now as priest and now as victim, for the author never employs that imaginative power which welds different features into one consistent picture. It is possible that he is influenced by another typical figure in the Jewish faith, that of the heavenly high priest Michael, believed by the Jews to represent their people continually in the sanctuary of God in heaven. Philo had already identified this archangelic high priest with his Logos. Philo's pupil —our author—may very well have combined the

Melechisedec Christ with the heavenly Michael in like manner. But this is merely supposition. What is certain is that the figure of Jesus was now distorted for good and cast into a priestly mould so that such Christians as were attached to the old Jewish high priest might have some compensation for their loss. The whole comparison is a theological *tour de force*. Thank heaven, the real Jesus was the outspoken opponent of the high priest. To take from the high priesthood the colours for His portraiture was pure perversity.

We do not really enter the domain of speculation until we come to the title 'Son of God.' The expression was originally a mere title for the Messiah, though even as such it was by no means common in the terminology of the schools. St Paul was the first to develop the theory of the heavenly Son of God, whose nature is inherently superior to our own. He is God's own true Son, whereas we only become His sons by adoption. As Son of God He is to be conceived as dwelling in heaven from all eternity. This Pauline theory of the Son of God was immediately accepted by the teachers of the sub-apostolic age (*e.g.*, the authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of St John's Gospel, and the letter of Barnabas) as a certain basis on which to build. It was now also drawn into the controversy with the Jews.

The Jews clung firmly to their belief that God was the Father of all, so that they might call themselves His children. They altogether refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God in an especial sense. The Christians answered by denying the Jewish faith in God the Father, and by separating Jesus still more

sharply from men. In St John's Gospel Jesus is made to tell the Jews in awful words that they are the children, not of God, but of the devil. A truly terrible statement, for it destroys the presupposition of Jesus' whole teaching—the divine Fatherhood. There is no longer anything childlike in the religious relationship, nor is a direct approach to God possible. The consequences immediately make themselves felt for the Christians. They are no longer sons of God, as St Paul still calls them, but 'children' of God, *i.e.*, the divine Sonship is reserved for Jesus. Henceforward God the Father and God the Son—with the addition of the word 'only'—belong together as in the later Trinitarian dogma. The expression God the Father in the earlier sense is confined to prayers. Theology knows it no more. The teachers who are responsible for having effected this change in reality perpetrated a robbery upon Christianity which only escaped notice because of the ardour of their apologetic zeal.

If, however, the Son of God was thus removed from the children of God, then the question as to His relation to God was bound to come to the front at once. Once more the Jews were the instigators. They accused the Christians of apostasy from monotheism, of pure idolatry. Our oldest Gospel, St Mark, refers to this accusation when it tells us that Jesus was condemned to death as a blasphemer because He had called Himself Son of God; then the Fourth Gospel reproduces the charge made by the Jews in so many words: "Jesus by calling God His Father makes Himself equal with God." "He blasphemes God in that

He being a man made Himself God." This accusation is, of course, directed against the worshippers of Jesus, and not Jesus Himself. For the first time the Christians are exposed to the painful reproach of endangering the pure faith in God by their faith in Christ. The whole abyss stands revealed between the Pauline theology and the words of Jesus, "Thou shalt worship God alone: no one is good but God." When John appealed to the passage in the Psalms, "I have said, ye are Gods," it was merely a theological evasion. The only inference from this passage was that the Old Testament itself did not employ the word God very strictly; nothing was gained thereby for Jesus' cause. There was only one means of rebutting the accusation that the Christians worshipped two Gods, and that was distinctly to declare Jesus' entire subordination to God. Such was John's escape from the dilemma. He makes Jesus Himself confess that the Father is greater than He, that He received all things from the Father, and has nothing of Himself, that in all His works He follows the Father and fulfils the Father's work. St John's Christology is a compromise between the pure divinity of Christ, to which the evangelist nearly attains, and the unity of God, the dogma brought forward by the Jews in opposition to it. This compromise—the theory of subordination—owes its origin to nothing else than the anti-Jewish apologetics. After all, this impaired divinity is a mythological figure. The absurd antithesis now arose, the Jews merely had the Father, but the Christians the Son in addition. That was not John's opinion, for he says that he alone has the Father, who has the Son, but it was

held by many Christian laymen. He that confessed this did, of course, at the same time admit that Judaism was the higher religion, free as yet from mythology.

The development of the Pauline Gnosis led the Christians a great deal further than the defence of the divine Sonship. Since the days of St Paul it was a universally accepted opinion that the whole of the Old Testament bore witness to Jesus as Lord. Both at the creation and in revelation He had acted mediatorially and vicariously. Now, as 'the Lord' is the Old Testament name of God, really all that is wanting in St Paul's account is the name God for Jesus. The thing was there. As regards the Jews this was a complete innovation. The framework of the old Messianic theology was broken. The Jews protested, We dare not accept a second God. The Old Testament knows only one God—the Creator, and His servants—the angels.

In spite of this protest the Christological exegesis of the Old Testament prevailed in the Church. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews God created the world through His Son. This Son, the effulgence of the divine glory, is highly exalted above all angels. It is of Him that we read in the Psalms, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands: they shall perish, but Thou continuest." Thereby the Jews are confounded with all their loud boasting in the revelation of angels.

John, too, declares that God created the world through His Son, the Logos. But above all it is

through Him that He revealed Himself to men. All theophanies, *e.g.*, that of Isaiah, were Christophanies. It was Christ who came to the patriarchs: even then children of God arose in a wonderful manner through His word of promise. No man ever saw God. Wherever, therefore, God is described as coming to man in the Old Testament, we must apply the words to Christ. The Epistle of Barnabas follows along the same lines. For him, too, the Lord of this world is the Son, and it is generally acknowledged amongst the Christians that God spoke to Christ when He said, "Let us make man." It is only with Justin, however, that we enter into the midst of the controversy with the Jews regarding the Old Testament. Both Christians and Jews accept the fact of the existence of mediators for God's revelation to man as certain. The use of the plural in Gen. i., the mention of the angels and archangels of God, the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs, compel us to admit this conclusion. The question is merely between Christ and the angels. Now, since in many of the narratives in Genesis and Exodus the expressions 'God' and 'angel of God' are interchanged, Justin concludes that the heavenly visitant must be more than an ordinary angel (for He is God), and yet not the highest God (for He is an angel). He is therefore the Son of God, the second God. However great his efforts, the Jew Trypho cannot quite escape from the horns of this dilemma. Justin also shows us to what an extent the Christological exegesis of the Old Testament has already proceeded.

What are the names by which Jesus is known in

the Old Testament? Word, Wisdom, Day, the Rising Star, Sword, Stone, Staff, Jacob, Israel, Joseph, Judah, Archangel, Angel, Apostle, Man, Son of Man, Child, King, Priest, God, Lord, Glory of the Lord. That is to say, Jesus is everything in the Old Testament.

Trypho's comment upon this is very effective: "Very well then; you Gentile Christians may be worshippers of this Lower Deity, but let us continue to be worshippers of the highest God." That hits the nail upon the head. It is a choice between monotheism and mythology. The Christians preferred the latter, because they thereby rendered themselves masters of the Old Testament, and because it was better suited to the needs of such as were Gentiles.

The Christians were fully persuaded in their own minds that they had come forth from this controversy with the Jews victorious in all points. They had satisfactorily proved Jesus to be the Messiah by wonders and prophecies; they had proved Him to be a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec, to be Son of God, to be Lord and God in the Old Testament. They had started from the Messianic proof of the early Christian Church and the Gnosis of St Paul; and upon this foundation they had continued to build without change of plan. A straight line of succession can be traced from St Paul through St John to Justin. Proceeding from the secure basis of the Pauline Gnosis, the surrounding country is conquered until the whole of the Old Testament becomes a Christian book, and the Lower God stands beneath and by the side

of the God of creation. But the controversy with the Jews mightily furthered and hastened this theological work.

And yet this victory over the Jews implied at the same time an increasing alienation from Jesus Himself. It is an awful spectacle: here we have theologians fighting for Jesus, taking up arms in His defence, exalting Him, deifying Him, and at the same time inventing texts in His favour, transforming and perverting others, and all the while they never asked who He was in reality and what His aims were. The subject of all this anti-Jewish apologetic is never really Jesus, but the titles of Messiah, Son of God, and the like. The evangelist, who is the ablest champion of this defence of the faith, composes a new life of Jesus without any compunction as a theological commentary or canon of interpretation for the stories which he found to hand. No single Christian said what he might have said: "Jesus is our Redeemer, because He led us to God, because He freed us from the Scribes, because He made our lives wholesome and honest as against the Pharisees, because He inspired us with glad hope, forgiveness, courage and joy." All this is to be found, to be sure, in the first three Gospels, though not as the real proof. The following, on the contrary, is indicated as the line of action to be pursued. He that would defend Jesus must first of all give Him the right titles; he must prove these titles by wonders and by prophecies; he must ransack the whole of the Old Testament for corroborative matter, and all the while care as little as possible for the real Jesus. This plan had such wide-reaching effects that to this day it is difficult to

retain one's joy in Jesus in the teeth of all Christological fables.

The Christological controversy served to keep alive amongst the Christians the sense of the contrast between their religion and that of the Jews. Simultaneously, however, a strong current was making for a silent and gradual approximation of the Christian faith to that of their adversaries. Jewish eschatology, the Jewish belief in angels, even Jewish conceptions of God Himself, pass over into the Christian Church more and more extensively, though without at first attracting notice.

In its origin Christian eschatology was merely a form of the Jewish. All that Jesus did was to simplify and denationalize the Jewish hope. Even in St Paul we notice a very great increase in apocalyptic conceptions, theories as to the metamorphosis of the body, the concatenation of catastrophes, Antichrist and his destruction. Next the Christian Apocalypse regularly flooded the thoughts of the future hope with the Jewish Apocalypse. Nor did the process cease: it continued in an increasing measure. One single fact proves this more than an entire series of treatises. The whole of the later Jewish apocalyptic literature, even that which dates from after the year 70 A.D., crosses silently over to the Christians, and is held by them in canonical estimation. The Epistle of St Jude employs the books of Enoch and the ascension of Moses; Barnabas uses the Apocalypse of Ezra; Hermas the prophecy of Eldad and Medad; Papias actually quotes a text from the Apocalypse of Baruch as a saying of

Jesus. And by the side of this apocalyptic literature a whole mass of eschatological mysteries passes over to the Christian teachers by oral tradition, so that the further we are removed from Jesus the more abundant the esoteric Jewish doctrines as to the future which we encounter amongst the Christians. This applies, *e.g.*, to the legend of Antichrist, but not to it alone. If in spite of 1 Cor. xv. the belief in the resurrection of the flesh obtained a firm footing as Christian dogma, Jewish influences may very well have been at work here. Chiliastic fancies dominate not merely bishops like Papias, whose critical powers are not very great, but even theologians like Justin, and give rise subsequently to a great movement in the Church through Montanus and his prophetesses. In spite of all Hellenistic influences, the gaze of Christians is ever turned expectantly towards the Holy Land in which Messiah is to descend together with the heavenly Jerusalem. One feature alone is wanting in this Utopia—Israel's political position; in every other point the majority of Christians are Jews as regards their hopes for the future. Nor was this attended by any immediate evil consequences. Very soon, however, the influx of the Jewish eschatology caused a line of cleavage to appear between the enlightened and educated, who abominated these sensual expectations, and the plain and simple Christians, who clung to them with all their heart and soul. The greater inroads Judaism makes, the greater the severity of the subsequent conflict between the Hellenistic and the Semitic spirit in Christianity.

The belief in angels naturally formed an integral part of Christianity from the very first. Yet how

very little Jesus says about angels. So close is the connection between Him and His disciples and the Father that there is no room for any intermediary beings. Here, too, St Paul takes up the position of Jesus. He will not suffer the intervention of angels in the relationship to God. He is at bottom opposed to angels, whom he almost always pictures to himself as being hostile to God, and tempting men away from God. Once again it is the Apocalypse which submerges Christianity under a flood of Jewish fancies. Here the angels regularly occupy an intermediary position between men and God. They are the channels of all communication from earth to heaven, to such an extent that angelolatry has already to be forbidden. One of these angels, Michael, is considered to have vanquished Satan in heaven, and ranks as a kind of redeemer. The process thus begun, continues according to the rule: the further removed from Jesus the deeper the descent into Judaism. Our Gospels are very instructive in this connection. The first old tradition which they incorporate is as yet free from angelology, but in the later the secondary parts, in the stories of the birth and the resurrection, angels, *e.g.*, Gabriel, have an important rôle assigned to them. It is only in St John that the idea then emerges that Jesus' intercourse with God was effected by means of a constant ascending and descending of the angels. But it is the book of the Acts which best shows us how important the faith in angels had become by this time for the ordinary layman's religion. Angels are pictured as the constant companions of the saints: they counsel and comfort them, and set them free from grievous

dangers; but for simple Christians too they are mediators carrying men's prayers up to God, and bringing back His answers. An average Christian has henceforth more to do with the angels than with God. Every page of our principal authority in angelology, the "Shepherd" of Hermas, proves that this statement is no exaggeration. To begin with, his knowledge about angels is boundless. There are the seven archangels, and their head, Christ. There is the angel of repentance, the angel of punishment, the two angels of righteousness and wickedness, the angel of the prophetic spirit, the angel of pleasure and of deceit, the angel Thegri, who is set over all animals, and many more. The very fact that he sometimes mentions Christ by the side of the archangel Michael and sometimes sets Him in his stead, proves that his faith in Christ is only intelligible to him as a special case of his belief in angels, but that at the same time he cannot quite rearrange the angelic hierarchy to suit his own ideas. Angels are the intermediaries in the whole sphere of religion. Men are handed over from one angel to another for their higher education, and so God's purposes are carried out. This angelology appeared to the Christians at one time to be so important that they formulated it dogmatically. The Apocalypse begins with the salutation from God, from the seven angels before His throne, and from Jesus. In like manner Justin defines the Christian faith as belief in God, in Christ, in the angelic host, and in the Holy Ghost, although he is acquainted as well with the enumeration of the Holy Ghost in the third place. Here, too, it is quite possible to account for the firm footing

which this belief in angels obtained in the Church by the admission of the Jewish Apocalypses, the chief source of Jewish angelology. But oral intercourse with the Jews did more than anything else. However caused, this importation cannot be considered to have been a blessing.

The Christian faith in God inevitably suffered loss through the influx of so many later Jewish speculations. It is wonderful how rapidly the early faith in God the Father deteriorates. Men like St Paul and St John, who stand on the same high level as the Gospel of Jesus, do indeed from time to time give glad expression to their faith that God has manifested His love to us as the Father. But these same theologians, writing as apologists, proclaimed the terrible God of wrath or the hidden, unapproachable God who decrees death upon all who stand without the Church. What wonder, then, if even within the Church Christians but seldom obtained or retained the joyful trust in God the loving Father, and were content with His deputies and substitutes, Christ, the angels and the saints. At present, no direct intercourse with God is possible, for He is surrounded by His heavenly court filling all the heavens and encompassing Him so closely that no eye can pierce through it. It is only in the future, when the angels shall have smitten the whole earth with their plagues and executed their judgments, that one may hope that God will appear upon earth in mercy, though still inspiring terror. So Christians and Jews alike had once more reverted to the old conception of God, and the resulting frame of mind was a state of suspense, a perpetual oscillation be-

tween fear and hope, neither trust nor joy. And this again brought about the further consequence that the Christians, not being able to take their stand firmly upon the redemption, which Jesus had really effected, were the more inclined to look for their superiority in the wrong quarter, *i.e.*, in the vain imaginations of Christology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.

CHAPTER V.

The Law and Jewish Ethics.

Next to Christology the question as to the law was the chief point of contention between Jews and Christians. Since Paul had proclaimed the annulling of the law for all Christians, they had remained practically free. Isolated attempts on the part of the Jews to reintroduce the law among the Christians were at once energetically repulsed—we need but look at the Epistle to the Hebrews, and at that of Barnabas. In Justin's time, things have come to such a pitch that those who cling to the law after the manner of the old Jewish Christians are denied all hope of future blessedness by many members of the Church Catholic. It was impossible to go back upon the position laid down by St Paul. But to formulate and establish his theses soon proved to be impracticable. He himself had gone no further than to declare that the law had been annulled. The Jews forthwith reproach the Christians with having fallen away from the faith of the fathers in

order to live in a state of immoral license. All that St Paul said about the influence of the Holy Spirit and one's baptismal obligations was in vain. The absence of law meant licentiousness. The reproach of the Jews was all the more dangerous as they had an appearance of right on their side with their political denunciations. Thereby they compelled the Christian apologists to take up a positive position towards the law. The point to be proved was that far from being apostates, the Christians alone truly observed the law. In reality they were maintaining that which was not true. No man in all the world ever observes the Sabbath, circumcision and the regulations concerning food, by not troubling about them. This was not the first time, however, that the art of the theologian managed to turn No into Yes, and Yes into No.

The First Gospel makes the earliest attempt in this direction. It is possible that the great declaration in the Sermon on the Mount, "I came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it," may have been originally inserted by Judaizers. It is certain, however, that the words, as we read them to-day, are to be taken, not in a Jewish sense, but in that of the Catholic Church, and only thus obtained a footing in the Church. This is proved by the mere fact of the addition, "and the prophets" to the word "law." Jesus here simply declares that He is the true interpreter of the Old Testament, that He alone has seized its inner meaning, and that this meaning is to be accepted by the Church. Naturally this is only possible if the interpretation be free and allegorical, in other words, Christian. Christ is the second

Moses, who has seized upon the true meaning of the law. The Christians, therefore, do not transgress the law but fulfil it.

The addition, "and the prophets," is very characteristic of the methods pursued by the Christians in their apologetic. Whilst the Jews take their stand firmly upon the law and fight against the Christians from this basis, the latter substitute the "law and the prophets" in their defence: they shelter themselves behind the Old Testament as the word of God, of prophecy. Both the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Lucan writings, and the Johannine Gospel convert the controversy as to the law into one concerning prophecy. The law, too, is to be read as foretelling Christ. St Luke's procedure is very instructive in this connection. In the source which lay before him he found the saying: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fall." He could not simply omit the saying. It was too well known, and one had to define one's position towards it. He therefore inserts in front of these words as to the eternal validity of the law the other statement, "the law and the prophets were until John," in order at least to indicate their meaning. And then he further shows in what sense they are to be interpreted by the concluding words of the following parable. Moses and the prophets are the road to Faith, the law is to be for ever valid as a prophecy leading to Christ. Hence Paul says in the Acts, "I believe all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets"; and so too Jesus says in the Fourth Gospel, "If ye believed Moses ye would believe Me; for he wrote of Me"; as though the important matter

in the case of the law were believing and not much rather doing. Now, as soon as the law is itself regarded as a prophetic book the contrast between the law and Christ of course entirely disappears; the law can itself be explained as the Revelation of Christ, who is the giver of all prophecy and every word of God. This is what John has done. He was the first to regard the law given by Moses as a subordinate and merely preparatory gift of the same Logos who afterwards appeared in Jesus Christ in all His mercy and truth. Here the Pauline controversy as to the law is almost entirely forgotten. The law is itself regarded from a Christian point of view, but it ceases to count as law in the earlier sense of the word.

In spite of all, however, the controversy continued. It could not be definitely settled by simply smoothing over the real points of opposition. The fact that the ceremonial law was no longer obligatory upon Christians had to be established by some clear theory. The first attempts to discover such a theory are to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the speech of Stephen. The transitory nature of the ceremonial law is proved from the Old Testament itself. If God, speaking by the prophets, foretells a new covenant and a high priest after the order of Melchizedek and therefore not of Aaron's, He Himself declares the old legislation to have been superseded. The severe sayings of the prophets directed against sacrifices and the temple, in which God Himself rejects the Jewish ceremonial, point in the direction. These indications are expanded into a fully developed theory in Barnabas; he was one of the most outspoken opponents of Judaism,

and at the same time devoted heart and soul to the Old Testament. The starting-point of his criticism is the story of the breaking of the tables of the law by Moses as he descended from Mount Sinai; which signified that God had already gone back upon the covenant which He had proclaimed with Israel in order that the Christians might be the first to have the true covenant with Jesus sealed in their hearts. This criticism could, however, be refuted from the book of Exodus itself, and was therefore rejected by the Christian teachers. The opinion that God had given the law in a Christian spirit and that the Jews had misunderstood it in taking it literally, having been visited by an evil spirit, was of greater importance subsequently. Barnabas rests this theory upon numerous anti-ceremonial prohibitions in the prophets which proved to him that God does not desire their literal fulfilment. But this criticism was also unsatisfactory, failing as it did to distinguish sufficiently between the different parts of the law and verging perilously near upon Gnosticism by its assumption of a Satanic temptation. The only portions that held their ground were, first, the spiritual interpretations given to circumcision, the Temple, the regulations concerning food and the Sabbath, all of which were presumably a good deal older than Barnabas, and then, secondly, the important thesis: "We Christians have Christ's new law, which is the law of liberty."

Justin was the first to find a satisfactory explanation of the difficulty, and his answer has been accepted ever since by the Church. He collected the apologetic works of his predecessors, and also contributed to the collection. Peculiar to himself and decisive

for the future was his comprehensive view of history, with the leading thought of the divine education of the human race, and the acceptation of the Stoical conception of the everlasting law of Nature. The development was effected gradually. The righteous men of pre-Mosaic times knew the everlasting law of Nature, and by fulfilling the same attained to blessedness. Then God caused it to be written down in the Decalogue for the first time. And finally, after that it had been obscured in a variety of ways, Christ the new Lawgiver restored it again by setting up the two commandments of love. In Christianity, therefore, we simply have the eternal moral law restored to us in its original purity and perfection. God only gave the ceremonial law for a transient purpose. The Jews were marked by circumcision as a punishment, and the other ceremonial laws were added because of the hardness of their hearts to keep them from idolatry. True, the ceremonial law has an inner meaning which is for all time, besides the literal meaning which was but for a season, but then this inner meaning was not clearly revealed before Christ came. We find these thoughts of Justin's expressed still more clearly and consistently by Irenæus. Supported by these theories the Christians no longer felt themselves to be apostates but the possessors of a knowledge of the divine purpose in the granting of the law, which placed them in a position of proud superiority.

The significance of the whole of this controversy was purely theoretical. The actual freedom of the Christians from the law was its presupposition; it needed to be sanctioned, it already existed as a

matter of fact. Nor, thanks to this same theoretical character, had the new doctrine, that Christianity is the new legal religion, any bad consequences for the moment. This very doctrine, which had originated in the endeavour to meet Jewish views, was now employed to justify the breach with the Jews. Formally the point was granted, there must be a law, but the concession was merely the stepping-stone to the actual victory gained by the purely moral conception of the law. It was fatal, however, that the thesis as to the new law obtained a footing at the very time when Judaism had just begun to make its way into Christianity from another direction.

For, whilst the controversy as to the validity of the national law was occupying public attention, a far more important process was pursuing its silent course with entirely opposite results. All that was essential in Jewish ethics was tacitly being accepted by the Church, just as the apologetic and angelology in the domain of faith. The squabbles of theologians are not the only objects of importance in the world. The greatest changes are effected quietly by the natural exchange of ideas in social intercourse without being either prohibited or permitted.

The reasons for this influx of Jewish ethics into the Christian Church are evident. The words of Jesus were at first but little known, and scanty as they were in number they referred to but a few of the many relations of life. But Paul himself had made very frequent use of the Old Testament, especially of the Proverbs and Psalms. It was easiest to follow him in this direction. Almost all the ethical admonitions, *e.g.*, that are contained in 1 Peter,

1 Clement, and also in St James, are based upon the Jewish proverbial philosophy in the Psalms, Proverbs, and also the Prophets, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon, or they are founded upon the Old Testament narrative as the great collection of moral examples. For all these Christian teachers the ceremonial law has simply been annulled, but the moral treasures of the sacred book they do not intend to give up under any considerations whatever. But in so doing they appropriate a system of ethics which has a character quite of its own—the ethics of later Judaism.

The procedure of the Christians was, moreover, exactly the same here as in the domain of faith. They took over the most recent Jewish writings of an ethical character and turned them into Christian tracts by a few scanty additions. An unquestionable instance of this is to be found in the Jewish Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, an example of an exceedingly copious and lofty moral literature, to which were appended a few Christological statements. The origin of the little tract concerning the two ways—the Way of Life and the Way of Death —is not quite so certain. It now stands at the commencement of the Didache as a catechism for proselytes, but we meet with it before this at the conclusion of the Epistle of Barnabas. The tract originally formed an independent work. There is nothing Christian about it, nor are parallels wanting in the nearly-related Jewish literature for the absence of everything that is distinctively and nationally Jewish. But the fact that a Christian and a Jewish origin can be maintained for the same writing is in itself remarkable. The exceedingly close resemblance

between later Jewish and Christian ethics alone renders this possible. The commandments and parables of Hermas likewise set forth a morality which is closely connected with that of the Testaments, and must be called Jewish, if we except a few sentences. Probably Hermas really made use of Jewish tracts. It is worth noticing, too, that so powerful a Christian work as the Epistle of St James could be considered Jewish on account of its surprisingly abundant points of contact with Jewish moral writings.

The presuppositions of these later Jewish and early Christian ethics strike us to-day as strangely childlike. Every human being is placed between God and the devil. Both would influence him and win him over. For this purpose they send forth their angels or spirits to him. Now these are nothing but the various moods and feelings, fancies and impulses, which are conceived of as something foreign to the man and due to external influence. We find it is true beside this, the impersonal conceptions of lust, pleasure, and conscience as immanent powers. Man is completely free to decide between good and bad. According to his decision the good or evil spirit wins the upper hand in him and the thought passes into deed, with the consequent reward or punishment. Even after the deed is done man retains his freedom. If he has hitherto followed the evil spirit he can choose the road of repentance which leads home again. Not only the Testaments and the commandments of Hermas, but the Epistle of St James and even the First of St Peter presuppose conceptions such as these.

From the abundant ethical material of all these

writings we can easily recognize what appeared to be of especial importance to later Judaism. First of all, as a rule, comes the demand to believe in the one God, the Creator of the world, *i.e.*, the confession of monotheism in opposition to the polytheism of the converts' surroundings. "Believe thou, above all, that there is one God who hath created all things." Such is the beginning of the commandments of Hermas, and the Two Ways begins in a similar fashion. That there is one God is the fundamental article of the creed which even the devils believe. All the catalogues of virtues in Hermas begin with faith. Thoroughly Jewish, again, is the circumstance that Hermas immediately adds the fear of God to faith, and the Two Ways describes religion as the "fear of God." Indeed that is the name which is characteristic of Jewish propaganda everywhere.

The next thing that is enjoined is usually continence or chastity: the commandment to keep oneself unspotted from the world. The whole world appeared to the religious man of that age to be a temple of immorality, be it in deed or merely in desire. The manifold temptations with which the religious man is assailed in his goings out and his comings in are minutely described, sometimes too minutely, so that they acquire an especial interest of their own. For it cannot be maintained that Judaism merely took sins that were actually committed into account. The distinction between sins of fact and sins of thought was one with which it had long been familiar, and through the greater inwardness of the moral claim it had only too often been led to a weak and even morally dangerous introspection of motives and

the birth of sin. By its detailed examination of the origin of an evil lust in the author's heart, the first vision of Hermas provides a commentary on the text in St James: "People are in every case tempted by their own passions—allured and enticed by them. Then the passion conceives and gives birth to sin, and sin on reaching maturity brings forth death." Hence the exhortation to the strictest vigilance and discipline of the senses. Men are warned against the dangers, not only of immorality, but also of drunkenness, against the eagerness to acquire wealth and to seek amusement, against luxury; and the close connection between these sins and the first, which is the greatest of all, is pointed out.

Next to chastity we hear most frequently of singleness of heart, and of its contrary double-mindedness. The ideal of the religious life was held to include the earnest endeavour to attain to a morality which should be at once complete, clear and simple, lifted far up above all doubt and hesitation or secret participation in the forbidden fruit, and of transparent sincerity both in what it did and in what it left undone.

Within the narrower circle of the brethren, sympathy, benevolence and compassion are esteemed most highly. To visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction is almost the half of true religion for St James and also for Hermas. At all times the Jews have achieved very striking results by their works of charity to the poor of their own faith. A proof of this is the wonderful amount of cohesion that existed amongst the Jews of the dispersion. At the same time, however, they exaggerated the value of

such charity to a terrible extent. The text, "Love covers a multitude of sins," which made its way from later Judaism into all early Christian writings, as though it were the most important article in the creed, is taken to mean, "Almsgiving lightens the burden of sins." But, on the other hand, a more inward signification was attached to compassion and pity. And the inference was then drawn in a manner which reminds us almost of the Gospel itself, that all anger, jealousy, envy and hatred are of the evil one and must be combated.

It is by no means easy clearly to characterize the difference between these late Jewish ethics and the ethics of the Gospel. The latter have evidently found an ally in the former. Both agree in their indifference to all that is merely national, in their greater inwardness, in their extension of the claim of morality to the whole of man's life. We come across Christian sayings, even reminiscences, of Jesus in St James' Epistle, although the author is probably almost entirely unacquainted with the words of the Gospel.

And yet it is a new ethics which now enters into the Christian Churches. The most striking characteristic is legality. It would be going a great deal too far, it is true, to ascribe its origin to the influence of Judaism alone. It is a constantly recurring feature in the history of religion that that which began in the freedom of spirit ended—was bound to end—in the restriction of law, for it is only possible to discipline large masses of men by laws and institutions. This process was still further accelerated in the Christian Church by the rise of the Gnostic heresies which in many cases

proclaimed an entire emancipation from law and order, to the ruin of the Churches. Judaism played a very important part, however, in the introduction of the idea of legality into the Church. The Old Testament and later Jewish literature, which was read for purposes of edification to the almost entire exclusion of every other, presented the religious relation predominantly as one of obedience to the law resting upon positive divine authority and confirmed by threats and promises.

In his Jewish source Hermas found a parable describing the dispersion of the people of God—the Israelites—all over the world under the protection of the law. The archangel Michael was the governor of this people, and gave the law to each individual Israelite. Varying results followed, and these the parable indicated by its distinction of three principal classes: the righteous, the sinners who have not as yet lost all hope of repentance, and the utterly lost. The law he explains as being the Son of God, and the people of God as the different peoples who have accepted the Faith. But a few lines further on he forgets his Christian exegesis, and is completely under the influence of his Jewish source. Even the name and office of Michael are left unaltered. He speaks of the law and of the law alone. Martyrs are men who have suffered death for the law, while there are others who were grievously oppressed for the law—though they were not actually put to death—and did not deny their law. The meaning which he attaches to the law is, of course, quite different to that which it possessed in his Jewish source, but the form is the same. Like Hermas, James introduced purely

Jewish legalism into the Christian congregations; and in whatever other devotional writings we find emphasis laid upon the keeping of the commandments as the most important factor upon which reward and punishment depends, these old Jewish associations are exercising their influence by the side of the teaching of Jesus.

The consequences of this legal view of morality were exactly the same as those which manifested themselves in Judaism. The moral ideal is divided up into a number of single equivalent commandments which soon defy every attempt at comprehensive survey. They have to be learnt by heart as something external, something that derives its authority entirely from its divine origin and the system of rewards and punishments, *i.e.*, from results. Now, too, the practice of drawing up long lists of virtues and vices becomes increasingly common among the Christians. The tract of the Two Ways is a model for such lists. First of all, the chief sins are enumerated in the order of the Decalogue and forbidden; then follows the prohibition of the roots of these sins in desire, thought, and speech. The Testaments of the twelve patriarchs ascribe a vice or a virtue to each of the patriarchs, which are then examined at length in their origin and their consequences. The commandments of Hermas treat of the single virtues or vices successively and separately in quite a similar manner, whilst other portions of the book give us catalogues of virtues arranged according to the numbers 7 and 12. Traces are not absolutely wanting in Hermas that he perceived the necessity of an inward connection of the virtues

in man; but he is quite incapable of setting forth this connection clearly. The author of the Epistle of St James, too, has an idea, though he is unable to give it anything but the baldest and most external expression, that moral action is, or at any rate ought to be, an individual whole. There is a continual process of addition and subtraction; where one is wanting, the sum is not complete. Then, too, faith and works stand to each other in a perfectly external relation. Man is no longer placed face to face with the three great realities: he is immersed in a sea of details where no one knows exactly what is important. The only connecting links between these separate commands are the divine sanction and the consequences preordained by God. That is "good" which has been revealed to mankind by God and His angels, and—so the Christians go on to say—which Jesus and His apostles have taught, and which has the promise of future reward.

But as soon as the positive law sets up a criterion of good and bad, the conception of works of supererogation, of merit, arises. Even St Matthew had connected alms, prayer and fasting in his Sermon on the Mount as acts done for God's sake and meriting special reward. But it was Hermas beyond all others who sanctioned the Jewish idea of 'merit' by his prophetical writing. He discovered a parable in his source intended to illustrate this very idea. There was a servant who did a good work in addition to the task laid upon him by his Master, and then divided the reward which was allotted to him among his fellow-servants, thereby meriting a double reward. So in like manner fasting is doubly meritorious:

firstly, as a good work in addition to that which God has commanded; and secondly, in so far as one denies oneself something in order to divide it among the poor. Hermas did, it is true, write a criticism of fasting by way of a preface to this parable, and gave it a Christological interpretation; but the Jewish theory of merit can be read between the lines, and obtains a firm footing.

The diffusion of this same conception was still further aided by the code of morals current among the Jewish proselytes. There were proselytes of different degrees; such as only subjected themselves to the Jewish morality of the Two Ways, and such as took upon them the whole yoke of the Lord. It was only the second that led to perfection. The insertion of the catechism for proselytes into the Christian Didache gave this theory of a double standard of morality—with modified demands in the second case—apostolic sanction. In other cases, too, the fatal use of the word 'perfection' passes over from Judaism to Christianity. In St Mark Jesus calls upon the rich man to sell his goods, else he would not inherit eternal life; but St Matthew says else he would not attain to that perfection, which goes beyond obedience to the commandments. On the other hand, in St Matthew, the saying of Jesus as to the turning of the other cheek is still a command, it is a part of God's will, to do which is for all men the way into the kingdom of God. In the Didache we find a tendency to account this a a special mark of perfection, and inasmuch as it takes this command and the similar sayings concerning love for one's enemies and boundless liberality as

illustrations of the divine love and not of the love of one's neighbour, it must be held to be in a great measure responsible for the transformation of the core and centre of the claim of Jesus into a work of supererogation. The best way of realizing how far removed from the teaching of Jesus is this tendency to attach an especial value to the performance of more than duty requires, is to recall Jesus' parable about the unprofitable servants immediately after reading the fifth parable of Hermas.

But by far the worst consequence of the encroachment of legalism upon morality concerns the religious relation itself. Religion is again turned into a legal relation of performance and reward. God is the taskmaster and judge; man His slave who seeks to earn his reward in fear and trembling. Owing to the Jewish source from which he worked, this change is to be found very largely exemplified in Hermas. Every deed, be it good or bad, is recorded in the heavenly account-book, and every change of fortune is considered as the divine answer to man's actions. Hence all misfortune is looked upon as punishment, with the possible exception of martyrdom, and even in this case its value for the sinner consists in its being repentance for his sins. If the misfortune appear to be greater than the merited punishment, then it must be supposed to have a supererogatory efficiency, and to be punishment for the sins of other members of the family. According to strict justice, the punishment lasts exactly as long as the sin has been indulged in; but for our feelings a day of pleasure corresponds to a year of torment. Amongst the evils and misfortunes which the author is especi-

ally fond of looking upon as punishments, may be mentioned business losses, illness, disorder, ill-treatment at the hands of the unworthy. And yet if one meets with any one of these misfortunes one may still account oneself happy, for it is a proof of the divine education—God wishes our betterment—a sign that one need not fear retribution in the world to come. And then again we come across another genuine Jewish feature. God is not entirely tied down to this legal system. The Jewish religion is ever a religion of justice, and of mercy besides. As Almighty Sovereign, standing above all law, God can, according to His own good pleasure, set strict justice aside, and pardon. He then merely strikes out the debit side of the account. Hermas is full of the praise of God's mercy; he thence derives all his comfort. Were it not for this we should despair. This arbitrary exercise of mercy, however, which at times breaks through the framework of the legal religion, changes one's general impression but little. It does not allow of the growth of any unshaken confidence. There is no cessation of that alternation between hope and fear which characterized Judaism before Jesus and St Paul, which must exist wherever an external law intervenes between God and man.

The second principal characteristic which sharply differentiates the ethics influenced by Judaism from the ethics of the Gospel is its ecclesiasticism. This tendency, too, originated independently in the Christian Churches, and merely received a powerful impetus through the pattern presented by Jewish ethics, which for a long time previously had tended to accentuate the contrast to the heathen world, and to tighten the

bonds of ecclesiastical unity. St Paul had already been strongly influenced in this point by the ecclesiasticism of Jewish ethics. All that his successors did was to continue and to exaggerate what he had begun.

In the first place, the Christians take over the position occupied by the Jewish synagogue towards the Gentiles. The conceptions 'Gentiles' and 'world,' are, generally speaking, an inheritance from Judaism. The Jew included all the peoples and states of antiquity in all their manifold variety as one uniform mass under the conception of the 'nations' (Gentiles), and contrasted them with his Church as an unclean world under the dominion of demons. St Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount shows Jewish colouring in this particular. Those who are felt to be furthest removed from the Christian ideal are called Publicans and Gentiles. "Do not even the publicans the same?" "Do not even the Gentiles the same?" and so again, "Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." The evangelist does not notice how badly this colouring of his words harmonizes with Jesus' own life. As for Hermas, his thoughts and words are entirely influenced by this theory. The righteous, sinners, heathen—such is his division of mankind. The righteous are inheritors of the world to come. The sinners and the heathen are lost; the former because they sinned and did not repent, the latter because they knew not their Creator. "They consorted not with the righteous, but lived together with the heathen." Such is the judgment upon one class of sinners. How would Jesus have stood in this judgment? But as it was

necessary after all to have dealings with the Gentiles, definite rules to regulate this intercourse had to be drawn up. The so-called decree of the apostles, the prohibition of fornication, of meat sacrificed to idols, of blood, and of strangled things, which was not yet current in St Paul's time, is to be entirely ascribed to Jewish influences. For there was nothing more abominable to the Jews than eating meat sacrificed to idols. The Didache speaks of it as the sacrifice of death, employing a Jewish term in order to foster this feeling of abhorrence. The prohibitions of blood and of snared game are in like manner Jewish. The starting-point is the Jewish psychology which the Christians appropriate. According to Jewish conceptions, the pure Jewish blood is tainted by fornication, hence this is coupled so frequently with idolatry. The passing of this decree does not imply a victory of the old Jewish Christianity, but merely of Jewish modes of thought with regard to the world.

The converse of this strict separation from the Gentiles is presented by the intimate relation of the brethren. Paul copies the Jews in this point and goes beyond them. Clement refers his panegyric of love to love of the brethren within the Church, and surely not without some reason. When Paul, summing up his moral exhortations, speaks of love as the bond of perfection, we are involuntarily reminded of the Jewish catalogues of virtues in which love is always the keystone of the arch. One of the most important manifestations of this love—though it is by no means exhausted herein—is benevolence to one's co-religionists. Love, peace, and humility belong together, and together constitute the complete

character of a faithful member of the Church such as Clement holds up to the Corinthians as an ideal. Humility does not, in this case, denote fasting, as it usually does in Jewish writings; it rather describes the subordination of the individual to the community in contrast with a proud individualism. That is the specifically Catholic conception. Hermas, again, shows us how his Jewish sources were bound to confirm this tendency. We hear their complaints of such as follow their own insight instead of the understanding of others, and who thereby go astray; about such as quarrel with each other, and do not live at peace with each other, but are always causing schisms and divisions; about such as do not unite in fellowship with God's servants, but holding themselves aloof, destroy their souls. In like manner the catechism of the Two Ways enjoins upon all Christians: "Daily shalt thou seek the face of the saints that thou mayest be refreshed by their conversation. Thou shalt create no schism, but be a peacemaker between them that strive." This is radically different from the saying of Jesus, "I came not to send peace but a sword."

No one will reproach the young Christian Church for seeking instruction and advice in its ethics from the older and far more experienced Jewish Church. The position of both Churches was at bottom the same. Why should the younger pass by the treasures of wisdom of earlier generations? But then one must not be astonished to find Christian ethics retrograding in many places to the position in which Jesus and Paul found them.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.

CHAPTER VI.

The Jewish Church and its Institutions.

Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the Jewish Church. The external rupture between the Christians and that Church had been brought about by St Paul, since whose day the Christians had stood outside of any ecclesiastical communion with the Jews. But it was none other than St Paul who had done more than all others to found and consolidate the new Christian Church; and this in two ways. First, he laid down the theory that the way to salvation led through the ecclesia of Jesus Christ alone, and that all were lost who remained as unbelievers outside of the Church. Only the believer will be saved, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus." But at the same time he established a connection between the new Church and the Israel of old, by means of his gnosis, through the theory: "The Christians are the Israel of God, the spiritual Israel; all pious Jews of pre-Christian times were Christians before Christ."

The immediate consequence of these great theories of St Paul was that, generally speaking, the Jewish ecclesiastical idea struck deep root in Christianity and grew apace. Hence the further result that customs and institutions of the Jewish Church were taken over into the Christian.

The most remarkable feature was the assurance with which the Christians, who, after all, were mainly recruited from among the heathen, proclaimed themselves as the true Israel of God. There is scarcely a single Christian who knows anything of a new Church, or says that Jesus founded the Church. The Christian Church is of immemorial antiquity, and the Christians are simply the Old Testament people of God. The emphasis which is placed upon the antiquity of the Church is often due, as in the Acts, to apologetic considerations. The reproach of schism and of unauthorized innovation is thus guarded against. The same consciousness is, however, shared by purely devotional writings, which have no connection whatever with apologetics. The decisive factor was the supremacy of the Old Testament in all Christian communities. One could only read and love the Old Testament, if one found therein the history of the 'fathers' of one's own people. As soon as the Christians began to reflect upon the matter from a theoretical point of view, they had to confess that the Jews were the primitive stock and the heathen Christians the proselytes. The authors of the Apocalypse, of the Acts and of the Fourth Gospel, say so quite plainly. But the very candour of their statements proves the entire insignificance of the distinction. There is no idea of the proselytes being

in a position of inferiority. All Christians are on a level in faith in Christ, and that is all that really matters. It is quite in accordance with the opinion of the majority of all Christians, when the book of the Acts represents the passage of Christianity from the Jews to the heathen simply as a progress ordained and devised by God, or even merely as a case of geographical expansion. All rifts and chasms were carefully concealed. All that men saw was the continuity of the history of the chosen people, its progressive evolution from the days of the patriarchs, kings, and prophets down to Christ, and thence to the apostles and the Gentile Church. The only dark passage in all this long history was the unbelief of their own contemporaries, the Jews; but then an explanation was sought and found for that in their obstinacy. Apart from this riddle all was clear, simple and satisfactory.

Whether the Christians called themselves 'people of God,' or 'Church,' was really a matter of indifference to them, for the Old Testament provided them with both expressions. The word 'people' or 'peoples of God,' seems, however, to have been the more popular. A man like the author of the Apocalypse knows but the one contrast: the people of God and the Gentiles. There are, besides, "those who call themselves Jews but are not," *i.e.*, the name of Jew belongs solely to the Christian people of God. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews lives especially in the idea of the Old Testament congregation with its divine institutions; but he finds, too, in the Old Testament the great company of heroes, the fathers of the faith, who light the Chris-

tians on their onward path. It never occurs to him that the righteous men of the Old Testament never confessed the Christian faith. They are all Christians in his eyes. Strangest of all, however, is the view of the Old Testament held by the author of the Lucan writings. He does not merely live in the distant past of the saints of old as though it were in that preliminary chapter of Christian history which he so dearly loves to narrate again in his long speeches (the reformer Stephen dwells at greatest length upon the patriarchs). No; he transfers his love to great portions of the Judaism of the time of Christ and His apostles. No Christian author has written with greater pathos and enthusiasm of Jerusalem and the Temple than he. Take the pictures of Simeon and of Hannah, take the story of the boy Jesus in the Temple, or the description of the pious worship of the early Christians in the Temple. The attempt has been made in all these instances to trace a Judaistic mode of thought dating from early times. Nothing could be more perverted. Our author's thoughts are simply catholic. Because the Christians are to him nothing but the Old Testament people of God, he is glad to record their attachment to the sacred institutions and customs of the Old Testament. His successors, the authors of the apocryphal histories of the birth of Jesus, followed in his steps. There we find nothing but enthusiasm for the Temple and the priests, and vows and sacrifices, and yet of Judaism no trace at all. That is the difference between the old time and the new. The old time was a time of strife. The new time has so completely forgotten the strife that it is able to

interest itself in its former opponent and to love him in so far as he denotes the necessary preliminary to its own existence. Finally, the proud feeling of the Christians that they are the divine people of the Old Testament appears in a classical form in the First Epistle of St Peter. It is to Gentiles that the author writes: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, God's own people." This passage from the book of Exodus had already been quoted in the beginning of the Apocalypse, where we read: "Christ made us to be a kingdom and priests unto God." In both instances the text is quoted in writings intended at once to minister comfort and to sound the battle-cry. In the days of persecution, the Christians were especially fond of recalling the distinction between the chosen people and the Gentiles.

The other expression 'Church' meets us rather more rarely in the sub-apostolic literature; but (and this is significant) more especially in the writings which are in closest touch with Judaism. The evangelist Matthew, himself a born Jew, as he knows how to read the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and even follows the order of the books, is one of those who appropriate the Jewish term 'Church.' By 'the Church' he understands not only the single congregation which in its local organization is sharply distinguished from the Gentile world, but also the Church Catholic, that great juridical body corporate, the government of which Jesus is said to have handed over to Peter as His successor and vicar. All that Peter determines as legislator in the Church shall be valid for the kingdom of God. For by the power of

the keys, the right of binding and of losing, is signified ecclesiastical legislation. Unfortunately we know neither when nor where the celebrated passage was written. In all probability the Roman Petrine tradition and the consciousness of Roman power here find utterance for the first time. For the first time, too, and surely not merely by chance, the Church and the kingdom are almost identified in this important ecclesiastical document. In a passage peculiar to St Matthew, Jesus says to the Jews: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." What is the kingdom of God which the Jews have possessed? It is not, as in other passages, the future Messianic kingdom, but the theocracy, the divine rule. The evangelist might just as well have said, "Ye shall no longer be the Church." In other places St Matthew distinguishes between the kingdom of Christ, the present Church, and the kingdom of God, the ideal Church. It is quite natural that a man who had the interests of the present Church so much at heart should identify it in thought with the coming kingdom. But by so doing he has taken a great step forward in the direction of Roman Catholicism.

It is a remarkable coincidence that the other old writing, the "Shepherd" of Hermas, which speaks most about the Church, certainly dates from Rome, and was written by a Christian who was perfectly familiar with Judaism. In the third vision and the ninth parable he has made use of a Jewish document which describes the building of the tower of the Jewish Church with the stones of the depths, *i.e.* the fathers before Jacob, with the stones of the twelve mountains,

the twelve tribes of Israel, and with the stones of the plain, the proselytes. This Jewish parable he interprets as signifying the Jewish Church, but makes it refer at the same time to the kingdom of God, which is once again an instance of the close connection between these two conceptions at Rome. Again, in a thoroughly Jewish fashion the Church is described as being exceedingly old, for it was created first of all things, and the world was made for its sake. There is an exact parallel in the Apocalypse of Ezra: God created the world for the sake of His people. Several other passages about the Church, partly of a speculative nature, which are contained in the "Shepherd" of Hermas and in the Second Epistle of St Clement, which likewise dates from Rome, can only be explained as imperfectly understood plagiarisms from Jewish sources. The Church is, *e.g.*, declared to have been created before all else, before the sun and the moon, because the Spirit which animates the Church is, according to Gen. i., older than the world; but turn the page and we read that God created His Church only on the sixth day of creation, and blessed it when He created man and woman, because the embryonic Jewish Church began with the first pair of human beings. Those are, to be sure, harmless speculations enough. The important point is this, it was first of all at Rome that the Christians felt themselves to be a Church and the beginning of the kingdom of God.

We meet with the same close connection between Church and kingdom of God in the so-called eucharistic prayers of the Didache. "As this bread was scattered upon the hillside and being gathered

together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the world into Thy kingdom." "Be mindful, good Lord, of Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love, and sanctify Thy people and gather them together from the four winds into Thy kingdom that Thou hast prepared for them." These were not really Christian eucharistic prayers at all. They were prayers in use among the Jews of the dispersion, and were recited at the meals of the assembly. Our Christian author adapted them for the service of the Church. The hope in the reunion of the scattered children of Israel and their future return to the land of Palestine is a part of the unchanging framework of Jewish prophecy. Through these prayers it passed over into Christianity and there confirmed the feeling of ecclesiastical unity.

The necessary consequence of the acceptation of the Jewish idea of the Church was the acceptation of all the narrowness and the intolerance which this idea implied amongst the Jews. It is, of course, possible that the Christian congregations would have been impelled to make these extravagant and intolerant claims quite of themselves, urged thereto by the sense of their superiority to their surroundings, and by their consciousness of power. But this abstract possibility may safely be disregarded, since the influence of the Jewish Church, which is the only other adequate cause, is so patent at every step. "Extra ecclesiam salus nulla," comes to be the motto of the Christian religion. It is only the symbol that has changed. It is not the ceremonies, the Jewish blood, that are efficacious, but the Christian faith. But the high

claim, the exclusiveness, the compassionate contempt of the Gentiles, are transmitted to the new people of God. True, faith was a spiritual possession, and yet one is bound to ask oneself whether a Church which demands faith in the ecclesiastical Trinity stands very much higher than one which forbids diverse kinds of food. That which constitutes Jesus' wonderful greatness, His open eye for righteousness and goodness wherever it was to be found, amongst publicans, Samaritans, or Gentiles, can no longer be fitted in with either conception of the Church.

The limitation of salvation to the Church is, it is true, very seldom expressed in so many words. The apologetic writings which preach the idea most zealously, the Acts and the Fourth Gospel, do not once mention the Church. They only speak of Christ and Faith, but then that is the Church. At all times zeal for Christology has been zeal for ecclesiasticism. The highest titles are assigned to Christ. Blessedness is centred in Him alone, and thus the demand is made for entrance into the Church. St Paul had led the way by setting up the theory, "Only he that believes can be saved." The author of the Acts follows: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou and thy house shall be saved," *i.e.*, become a Christian. "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men whereby we should be saved." The author of the Fourth Gospel takes the last step by transforming these thoughts of St Paul and St Luke into actual words of Jesus. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me." "Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he

cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The two propositions are identical. Only by entrance into the Church is blessedness to be acquired. No sentences in the whole of the New Testament bear a more catholic meaning than these theses of the two Christian apologies. John is perhaps the narrowest and most uncompromising theologian of the New Testament. In the entire degradation of John the Baptist, in the proclamation of the hard-heartedness of the Jews and of their descent from the devil, in the verse, "All that have come before me are thieves and robbers," he reveals a skill which is almost awful in pulling down and thrusting into hell all that stands outside of the Christian Church. And his procedure appears to be all the more violent, because he forces Jesus Himself into his service in order to legitimize it. But what was to happen to the pious Jews who died before Jesus came upon earth without having learnt the Christian faith? Most Christian teachers did not recognize any difficulty whatever in the question, since they simply regarded all pious Jews as virtually Christians. That is why St John speaks of the Logos as present in the world, and in communion with His own long before His incarnation. It is because he is convinced that all patriarchs and prophets were Christians, children of God who believed in His name. Hermas is the first for whom the question as to the salvation of the Jews of the Old Testament presents any difficulty. He starts from the proposition that only he that bears the name of the Son of God, *i.e.*, only the Christian, can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now as the pious Jews were not baptized, and consequently not Christians, he assumes

that the righteous men of the Old Testament were baptized in Hades, after having previously listened to the preaching of Christ by the apostles and teachers who had descended into Hades. That was no bad solution of the problem. He who seriously believed in the strict limitation of salvation to the Church had to satisfy his narrow mind by means of absurd shifts such as these.

Fortunately, however, the genuineness of the picture of Jesus as we find it in the Synoptic Gospels has not been impaired by all the later ecclesiastical additions, and the fanatical narrowness of the faith of His adherents is thereby repeatedly condemned. The great examples of a breadth of view which were entirely non-ecclesiastical, were not to be rooted out. All those sayings of Jesus remained unimpaired, that the moral element alone—the fruit—is decisive in God's sight, and everything else worthless: that it is righteousness, love, and justice that God requires, and that these qualities please Him all the world over wherever they are found. How do the ecclesiastical authorities manage, then, to make the Jesus of the Gospels suit their theories? They attach ecclesiastical conclusions to the Gospels. The evangelist Matthew closed his work with the command of the risen Lord to evangelize and baptize, which confines salvation to the Church. The Gospel of St Mark received the concluding verses which are recognized as not genuine, and which contain the proclamation: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned," and this was put into Jesus' mouth! The author of the Lucan writings likewise makes the risen Lord utter the ecclesi-

astical command, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all the nations; and shows besides this in the Acts where salvation is alone to be found. Then came the Fourth Gospel and declared that all that was contained in the previous three must be understood in accordance with the teaching of the Church, and after an orthodox fashion. Thus the evangelist harmonized Jesus and the idea of the Church.

But for this later time the principle of salvation limited to the Church set up by St Paul had to be taken in the catholic sense that the Church did indeed afford the necessary presupposition for salvation, but by no means guaranteed it. St Paul had still hoped that his congregations would all enter into the kingdom as the elect of God's mercy. The sub-apostolic age was obliged to relinquish this optimistic faith entirely. It was by no means merely the Gnostic division which impelled men to take a more sober view of the Church. The fact that "average Christianity" was perpetually on the increase in all the congregations was too evident to be ignored, and that especially in seasons of persecution when the chaff is winnowed from the wheat. So we find the author of the Apocalypse plainly telling his fellow-Christians that whole congregations (Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea) are in danger of being lost, or at any rate of enduring the day of judgment in very small minorities. Away, then, with all comfortable assurance of salvation! Only he that endureth in the last great tribulation shall obtain the crown of everlasting life. The author of the Pastoral letters and the first evangelist put forth their theories, which

closely resemble each other, about the same time. The former compares the Church to a great house in which besides the gold and silver vessels there are also vessels of wood and vessels of earth, and some are to honour and the others to dishonour. How very differently had St Paul spoken before this of the temple of God full of the Holy Spirit. Then the vessels of dishonour, the vessels of wrath, had been the unbelieving Jews who were without. Even the sober, prosaic language of the pseudo-Paul reminds us of the great change which the lapse of time has brought about. St Matthew, too, has the same idea of the Church. He compares it to the field in which the tares grow up beside the wheat, or to the drag-net in which all manner of fish are caught. "Many are called but few are chosen." Then again, the Church is like a wedding feast, and some of the guests have no wedding dress. When the Lord appears they are cast out. In fact, there is only one comparison that we miss, that with Noah's ark. At any rate the later idea of the *corpus mixtum* is fairly started on its way by the writings of these two men. The evangelist John also gives expression to it when he sets forth the difference between the true and the false disciples in the last discourses of our Lord. There are branches on the vine which bear no fruit. These, men gather together and throw them into the fire and burn them. They alone are true Christians, who besides faith have love and keep the commandments. Soon after the Fourth Gospel there appeared at Rome the "Shepherd" of Hermas, a book whose main purpose was to shatter the false security in which many

churchpeople were lulled to sleep. Let them beware: on the day of judgment whole masses of Christians were doomed to be lost. It is not enough to be called a Christian. That does not lead one into the kingdom of God. Only he who is strong in the strength of the Son of God and wears the robe of the Christian virtues dare hope for blessedness. And then he makes a list of all the nominal and worldly Christians, and passes judgment upon them. Here again we have true evangelistic thoughts. As often as they meet us we feel "here is the Spirit of Jesus," though, it is true, Hermas has no longer quite enough uncompromising moral earnestness to carry them to their logical conclusion. On one occasion he speaks of such as will not reach the Tower (the kingdom of God) because of their sins, but will only get as far as a much lower place, and that only when they have been tormented and have fulfilled the days of their sins. And this grace is accorded to them because they have a lot and share in the word 'righteous.' Here we have the germs of a doctrine, not, indeed, identically the same as, but at least very like, the later doctrine of purgatory. That doctrine is a compromise between the stern dualism of Jesus (either kingdom of God or hell) and the idea of the Church, which tries to bridge over this dualism for its members. We have not, of course, got as far as this in Hermas. He still upholds the sentence of condemnation; sinners, even though they be Christians, shall be burnt with fire just as the heathen. The only strange thing is that those Christians who had so sharp an eye for the defects of the Church never venture to draw the

inference that the good prospers even outside of the Church and there wins God's favour. The Church shuts in their thoughts like a high wall. We must be content if within this high confining wall they are in earnest about the Gospel as far as they can consistently with the idea of the Church.

We cannot be surprised to find that when once the Jewish idea of the Church had been taken over by the Christians, many other things followed in its track. A whole mass of Jewish customs and institutions were either directly borrowed or were imitated, so that there should be something in a Christian dress to replace them.

The constitution of the Church was closely assimilated to the Jewish by the Old Testament foundation of the episcopal system. The first letter of St Clement, written at the end of the first century, sets up the sharp distinction between clergy and laity according to the standard of the Old Testament. Fortunately the parallel was incomplete, for the Christian priestly castes had no privileges derived from birth. But the sharp dividing line between the orders was to subsist and be respected under heavy penalties. The centralization, too, of the public worship in opposition to the many conventicles held by the Gnostics received Old Testament sanction. Clement writes: "Sacrifices are not offered everywhere, but only in Jerusalem, and there not in every place but in front of the temple on the altar, after that the sacrifice has been examined by the high priest and his ministers." Ignatius draws this conclusion: One altar, one bishop, one congregation of

worshippers. Where the bishop appears there let the people be.

The practice of paying the officials of the Church is also supported by Old Testament prescriptions regarding the support of the priests. In the Didache these dues are still paid to the prophets, "for they are your high priests." The revision of the Didache in the later apostolic constitutions substitutes 'priests' for 'prophets,' and this correction dates back to very early times.

Jewish models again are followed in the development of the tradition and office of teacher. The Pastoral letters are the principal source of our evidence, although that combination of the episcopacy with the teaching office which it was the aim of these letters to further fell through. Jewish doctrine had been handed down both in written Scriptures and by oral tradition. It is to the Scriptures and tradition that the Christian now likewise appeals. In the first place, the Old Testament canon is saved from destruction in the struggle against the Gnostics, and receives recognition as the Word of God. Compared with it all Christian evidence, whether written or oral, is counted as tradition in the first instance. We begin to hear the watchwords, "Teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles," "Teaching of the apostles' most sacred faith," "The faith handed over to the saints." We shall see later how this faith was formulated. We are here concerned with the form. The pseudo-Paul speaks of the apostolic deposit (παρακαταθήκη). It has been given by God to the apostle, and is to remain intact until the last day. This apostolic tradition is, of course, to be discovered above all in the

old Christian writings, and is there secured most safely from corruption. St Clement (about 95 A.D. at Rome) is acquainted with letters of St Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Acts, the Synoptic Gospels; and Polycarp (about 120 A.D. at Smyrna) with the First Epistle of St John and the First of St Peter besides. The manner in which both writers, Polycarp as well as Clement, use other people's words as though they were their own without marks of quotation, shows us how intimate an acquaintance with Scripture is everywhere presupposed, even at this early date. By the side of this, however, oral tradition is counted as altogether inexhaustible. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, made especial use of it in his explanation of the sayings of Jesus. But this written and oral tradition was not allowed to develop without stint or stay. The safe keeping of the tradition was entrusted amongst the Jews to the succession of Rabbis, and in the Christian Church to the succession of bishops. Their office is simply to preserve and hand on faithfully that which they have received. All development, all progress, is prohibited. But for all their boasting of the doctrine once for all delivered to the saints, a constant process of evolution was at work amongst the Christians, just as it had been previously amongst the Jews.

The public worship of the Church was also looked upon as an imitation of the Jewish. A letter like that to the Hebrews was bound to impel men to try and find the Jewish originals almost for every detail. They wished to see the pattern which Moses had seen on the mount when he wrote the law. St Clement of Rome is the first writer acquainted

with the letter to the Hebrews, and he makes the application. The bishops are spoken of as "those who offer up the sacrifices"; the value of ceremonial observance and the heinousness of ceremonial offences is insisted upon. The metaphor of sacrifice must have been used from time immemorial in the Christian communities. First of all, they spoke of the sacrifice of Jesus, or the sacrifice of the heart. But soon prayers are offered up as sacrifices, and very soon, even in the Didache, the Lord's Supper is celebrated as a sacrifice. The old conceptions of ceremonial purity and sanctity reappear forthwith. The Greek mysteries here exercised, it is true, almost as great an influence upon the Christian Church as the Jewish synagogue. But all that is consciously continued is the public worship of the Old Testament.

Sunday, the Lord's day, takes the place of the Sabbath, first in the Apocalypse, then in the letter of Pliny, and in most writings of the second century. This celebration of Sunday by the Christians instead of the Sabbath, is for Ignatius an important sign of the new religion. Jewish liturgies are used for divine service with short Christian additions. Hence the regular confession of sins. This Jewish origin likewise accounts for the fact that the name of God the Father occurs so seldom in the prayers of the congregation. The First Epistle of Clement, the Pastoral epistles, and probably the Didache as well, contain instances of Jewish prayers adapted for Christian use. But an earlier document—the Apocalypse—is full of Jewish liturgies. Just as in the synagogue, the service of prayer is followed by the reading of Scripture, by the sermon, and by a concluding prayer; for plainly the

Acts, *e.g.*, do not presuppose any other kind of service. The Lord's Prayer is regarded as the chief prayer for individual use; as such it is to take the place of the Jewish "eighteen prayer"; hence the command to use it three times daily. The doxology, too, which is attached to it, is of Jewish origin. Together with the prayers, the practice of fasting is taken over from the synagogue, the only change being that of the days. Instead of Mondays and Thursdays the Christian is to fast Wednesdays and Fridays, "so as to be distinguished," says the Didache, "from the hypocrites." The whole meaning of this ecclesiastical fasting is derived from the synagogue; it does not only imply humiliation in God's sight: it is also considered to be a means of obtaining special revelations.

In addition to this the Jewish institution of penance is very widely used in the case of particular faults of individuals. St Paul had been the first to introduce it. In his case this was absolutely necessary, for as he looked upon all sinful Christians as elect in spite of their sin, the possibility of repentance had to be left open for them. The evangelist Matthew shows us that amongst Jewish Christians a kind of penance was in use which he refers back to Jesus Himself. It rests upon a number of Jewish presuppositions. The Apocalypse proves a similar institution to have existed in Asia Minor, and according to Clement and Hermas we find it at Rome. Clement tries to derive it from Christian sources. Jesus' blood is so precious in God's sight that it obtained the grace of repentance for the whole world. But he immediately

reverts to Jewish thoughts. From one generation to another God gave the penitent room for repentance. Noah, Jonah, the prophets, all preached repentance. In the case of Hermas the Jewish conception of repentance follows almost of necessity from the sources which he used, for they attached an especial importance to right instruction as to repentance. Repentance is here regarded as a special divine favour. God grants it to one; He refuses it to another. The apostate and blasphemers of the Lord are alone excluded from it, as well as those that betray the servants of the Lord. For all other sinners there is a possibility of repentance, though with very varying chances of success. Repentance is essentially self-inflicted punishment. God does not at once pardon the penitent their sins. He that repents must inflict great torments upon himself and humiliate himself in all his ways, and pass through manifold tribulation. Abandonment of one's sin is, of course, an essential part of penitence, but as that is a duty anyhow, it is not enough. Works of supererogation are necessary for the right kind of penance and self-humiliation. Such are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. So the Second Epistle of St Clement enumerates them as instruments of penance of varying efficacy. The conclusion was probably formed by a public confession of sins, followed by the absolution of the Church.

There is no doubt that Jesus' call to repentance was not without influence in the introduction of the practice of penance; but the Jewish influence was by far the more powerful. This was the source of the uncertainty which began to be felt by the Christians

as to the limits of repentance and forgiveness. There are deadly sins for which one dare not offer up a prayer for forgiveness. The First Epistle of St John emphasizes this point without mentioning the sins by name. Hermas enables us to obtain some idea of the conflicting opinions at Rome concerning repentance. The majority of the congregations appear to think that the possibility of repentance always remains open. On the other hand, Hermas heard some teachers profess the doctrine that there was no other repentance than that at baptism, the forgiveness consequent upon which related to previously committed sins alone. It is evident that Hermas subjected these two opinions to a careful examination, for what his vision reveals to him is practically a compromise between the two. It is first of all revealed to him that after a certain fixed day there is no more possibility of repentance for the righteous, but that the way is kept open for the Gentiles alone. Previously to this, however, a general indulgence is granted by God for all sins. Even those who denied the faith among the persecuted are pardoned. Later on Hermas converts this oracle, given to suit a certain definite time and place, into the general rule of the Church. Repentance is to take place once for all after baptism for every Christian. Hermas is guided in all this by the Jewish conception of penance, the needs of the Church, and inspiration, never by the teaching of Jesus.

As time went on fresh loans were continually being made. The conclusion to which our study of eschatology and of angelology led us, applies here

too. The influence of the Jewish Church increases the further we are removed from the time of Jesus. Jesus and His disciples, although born and bred Jews, are far less biassed by the Jewish ecclesiastical system than the later Christians, who only recognized the Jews as their declared enemies.

One great advantage the early Christians derived from their constant contact with the Jewish Church. Opposed as they were by a religion resting upon an entirely historical basis, they were preserved from the danger of allowing their religion to be subtilized into a philosophy. The defence of Jesus and the controversy about the Old Testament guarded them against this peril. Whatever form He might assume, the God of the Christians remained a God of works and no philosophical abstraction: He was identified with Righteousness, and Hope looked forward expectantly to His works in the future. It was just the battle with the Gnostics that taught the Christians to value their great debt to Judaism.

But setting aside this one advantage, the impression left by the anti-Jewish apologetic of the Christians is distinctly bad. It exhibits a finished skill in the explaining away of unpleasant facts or of perverting them, of inserting one's own opinions into the text instead of simply explaining it. The sense of truth amongst the Christians in the sub-apostolic age must have been very small indeed. No certain answer is given to the central question: "Wherein does the superiority of Christianity over Judaism consist?" St Mark gives the best answer in his picture of Jesus as the Son of God exalted far above all parties

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and authorities both in word and deed. But the true answer must surely contain more than this. It must show us that the Christians themselves and not only Jesus have been redeemed to a new and higher life. That was what St Paul had cried out in exultation for all the world to hear: "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." But since then we scarcely ever hear the answer in connection with apologetics; it is only in the parting discourses of Jesus to His disciples in the Fourth Gospel that we meet with any conception of the all-conquering power of the love of Christ. Everywhere else the tendency of apologetics with its false antitheses is to make St Paul's answer downright impossible. If Christ revealed the whole of the Old Testament, what was the new element, then, which He brought? If Christianity is the new law, how is its freedom and inwardness to be recognized? If a new Church has merely been substituted for the old without losing any of its self-consciousness and fanaticism, what meaning can still be given to redemption from the Church? The attempt to crush the new religion into the categories of the old, lost all the ground that had been won by the destruction of these very categories by the new faith.

To these considerations we must add the by no means inconsiderable material influence of the Jewish Church, its piety, and ethics, and the invasion of Jewish literature and Jewish institutions. Politically Christianity becomes more opposed to the Jews than ever; the sequence—Paul, Luke, John and Barnabas—proves this. From a religious point of view, on the other hand, it makes advances to

Judaism and succumbs to the constant pressure of its influence. Catholicism, especially Roman Catholicism, is, from our point of view, the Judaizing of Christianity. It is not without reason that the Reformation means a reawakening of St Paul, the opponent of the Jews.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIANITY AND HELLENISM.

CHAPTER VII.

The Heathen State and the Heathen Religion.

It was very fortunate for the new religion that through Jesus' words, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," all revolutionary and zelotic projects of the Christians were nipped in the bud. As a Christian Pharisee St Paul had inculcated obedience to the powers that be as the will of God, and had held up the State to the Christians as God's ministry. This was before the beginning of the persecutions. After a short panic in Nero's reign the Christians had to endure the undisguised hostility of the State from the year 90 A.D. onwards. The persecution began in Asia Minor, the birthplace of the Apocalypse, and the place to which St Peter's first letter is addressed. The Apocalypse dates from the early years of the persecution. God's minister has been transformed into the minister of the dragon. Wild songs of triumph are now chanted by the Christians over the

imminent fall of Rome, the great whore. To refuse to worship the emperor comes to be the sign of a Christian. Yet no word is uttered of revolution: the patient endurance of the saints, that is the watchword. And with that the author preserves his Christianity.

The Christians now have to choose between one of two feelings: hatred of the State as the power of the devil—that is what the Apocalypse preaches—or resignation to God's will. He rules even through the emperor. Which is going to be the stronger?

We must draw a clear distinction between the official position of the Christian writers and the feeling of many groups of laymen whose favourite book was the Apocalypse, and who shared the author's hatred against Rome. From time to time there is an altogether unpremeditated outburst of wrath against the tyrants, as in the case of Lucius, the Christian whose story Justin Martyr tells us. When he saw how Ptolemäus the teacher was condemned to death for no other crime than that of being a Christian, he broke out into reproaches against the prefect Urbicus who had passed the sentence, rebuking him for his unjust and unworthy behaviour. Being thereupon at once himself condemned to death, he cried out that he was very thankful to Urbicus. He knew that he was now quit of these bad masters of his, and was going to the Father and Lord of heaven. So, too, the Christian's longing for the end of the world—let grace begin, let the world perish—is to be interpreted as a heartfelt cry for delivery from the tyranny of the State. All the millenary expectations of the old Christians likewise presuppose hostility against the

State. They look forward with eager expectation to the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth in place of Rome. Meanwhile the Christian knows that his fatherland is in heaven. He is a stranger and a sojourner upon earth. The beginning of the first parable of Hermas is worth noting: "Ye know that ye live in a foreign land, ye servants of God, for your true city is far distant from this city." To hold opinions such as these in the midst of persecution was at least honest.

The official attitude of many of the Christian authors is an entirely different one. From first to last it is obsequious. Christianity is to be a *religio licita*, like Judaism and in the place of Judaism, and that at any cost. Hence it makes advances to the State, and even assigns a fixed place to it in the liturgies borrowed from Judaism. The author of the First Epistle of St Peter is anxious to adapt St Paul's words as to the powers that be to the changed circumstances of his own time. In so doing he abandons the position that the State is the minister of God, as the State which persecutes the Christians cannot possibly be so called any longer. For the Lord's sake, however, it is to be obeyed. The fear of God and the honour due to the king are not mutually exclusive; only let each keep to its own place. As yet, faith in the calling of the State and the right to exercise protection is as strong as ever, and St Paul's words on the subject find ready credence. Besides, obedience to the governor is a duty incumbent on the Christians because of the malignant slanders that are current. They have got to prove that they are no anarchists. And yet this letter, in

spite of its perfectly correct attitude to those in authority, claims to have been written in Babylon. Rome is Babylon, that is the author's secret meaning. And just like him, the author of the Pastoral epistles reminds his readers of the Pauline words, and explains them in the sense that they are to lead a tranquil and a quiet life, reviling no man, but kindly to all. The Lucan writings and the Johannine Gospel defend the Christians against the accusation of enmity to the State in the course of the narrative. The conceptions of Messiah and kingdom of God are explained in a non-political sense. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, as is proved by the pacific nature of the Christians. The kingdom of Jesus consists entirely in His testimony to the truth. And a proof of this is that when on one occasion the Jews wanted to crown Him king, He escaped from them by flight. Care is taken also to remove the reproach that the Christians refuse to pay taxes. It is proved that the Christians are the true Jews, and that the Jews lie with all their instigations. The trial of Jesus and the trial of St Paul are henceforward important subjects from an apologetic point of view. Pilate, Felix, and Festus have to appear as witnesses to the innocence of the accused. Above all, the whole plan of the book of the Acts furnishes the desired proof of the antiquity of Christianity. Christianity is nothing else than the old Jewish religion which is now spreading over Gentile countries.

The First Epistle of St Clement is the first document to afford us an insight into the political element of the old Christian liturgies. Its great concluding prayer contains the first petition known to us for

"all that are in authority upon earth; may God grant them health and wealth, and peace and concord." Again and again the statement is repeated that rulers derive their power from God. Even though it be older than the age of persecution—for presumably it is derived from Judaism—it was nevertheless commonly used in this age and so again forbade the Christians every kind of revolution. The author of the Pastoral epistles, and after him Polycarp, asks all the Christians to use this or a similar prayer. They are to pray for all men, for kings and all persons in authority, because it is only if peace and order be established in the State that the Christians will be able to practise their religion in tranquillity and quietness. As both of these authors write in a time of persecution, we may infer that it is the official attitude to the heathen world—one that is by no means a matter of course—that is here prescribed.

It was only when it became evident that neither the Church's prayers for the emperor and the governor nor the Church's literature exercised any influence whatever upon the persecutors, that the Christian apologetic literature, properly so-called, took its rise. The prophet Quadratus was the first apologist. He dedicated his apology to the Emperor Hadrian. Next came the philosophers Aristides and Justin under Antoninus Pius. The only innovation consisted in the instrument that was now employed. The frankly apologetic attitude of the Church was not new, but several decades older. Many glaring inconsistencies were, however, the result of this policy. The liturgies were especially rich in contradictory passages. Prayers are prescribed for the health and wealth of those in

authority, and at the same time, following the old Christian custom, for the end of the whole existing order of things. In his devotional treatise on prayer, Tertullian utters sentiments which are almost the exact contrary of what he says in his great *Apology*, which is addressed to the public in general. Justin protests the unpolitical character of the kingdom of God in his *Apology*, whereas in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, where the common Christian element is rather more evident, he longs for the establishment of the kingdom upon earth. Even John the evangelist, who as apologist eliminated as far as he could every eschatological element, eagerly looks forward in his first letter to the end of the world, when the State, whose servant Pilate was, shall disappear in the destruction of all things. At bottom there is a note of insincerity in the professions of friendship for the State on the part of all these apologists. It was their last resource. Open war prevailed between Church and State, and apologists like Justin died the death of heroes in this war. Their position is sufficient excuse for the contradiction in which they involved themselves. Their greatness lies in this, that when the decisive moment came they abjured the State and died like Polycarp with the confession, "Jesus is Lord, and not the emperor," upon their lips.

The Heathen Religion.

Its Jewish parentage in itself determined the position of Christianity towards all the popular religion of the Gentiles. Heathendom was all lies, darkness, and the service of the devil. Whilst the philosophical monotheism of the Greeks was com-

bined as a rule with a certain feeling of reverence for the ancient gods who were conceived of as subordinate powers of the world spirit, Jewish monotheism was from the first characterized by exclusiveness and intolerance. In the long run, however, this proved to be fortunate for the new religion, which was thus preserved from dissolution in the universal fusion of religions. Unfortunately, our authorities for the impact of Christianity upon Paganism are extremely deficient. The Acts resting upon the theory that St Paul always began by preaching to the Jews, avoid almost every mention of the struggle in its early stages. But for all that, some of the episodes which it recounts are exceedingly instructive. We there become acquainted with the Christian missionaries as the workers of miracles, faith-healers, and exorcists, creating great excitement which ends, according to circumstances, either in apotheosis or in outbursts of rage. In Cyprus they have to contend with a magician, at Lystra they are taken for Zeus and Hermes because of the healing of a lame man. The priest is on the point of offering sacrifice to them when the matter is cleared up. At Philippi they cure a certain prophetess of her idle superstition, and thus depriving her masters of this source of income, are ill treated and imprisoned as a punishment. All these anecdotes are valuable as types. Only, instead of Paul and Barnabas and Silas, we must also from time to time picture to ourselves missionaries of an inferior type of character, men, in fact, who were little better than magicians or exorcists. But of direct public attacks upon the heathen religion we hear but little. Occasionally the Christian revivalist holds a public

meeting in the open air. His object is to arouse the curiosity of his audience, he interlards his sermon with copious quotations from poets and philosophers, and in return for all his pains he will very probably be ridiculed by some passing philosopher, as Paul was at Athens. The most vivid picture of all is that given us of the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus under Demetrius. The silversmiths have begun to notice that the sale of the little shrines of Artemis is decreasing, because the preaching of the Christian missionary robs them of their sanctity. So they flock together and cause no little commotion throughout the whole city of Ephesus by their cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Here at last we have one clear point, where Christianity attacks the social system of the ancient heathen world. It was at Ephesus, too, where the Christians burnt all their books of magic, the charms called "Ephesian letters," on a great pile, and boasted that the value of these idolatrous objects amounted to 50,000 drachmas—an act which might likewise easily give rise to serious collisions. But when we have enumerated these few instances we have exhausted all the material that is of any value in the book of the Acts. The apocryphal stories of the apostles elaborate these themes, but in a grotesque and tasteless fashion corresponding to the taste of the later age from which they date. It is only with Tertullian, at the end of the second century, that we obtain a very complete insight into the countless problems and conflicts produced by the collision of the hostile religions.

On the other hand, we have a mass of Christian apologetic literature in which the attempt was made

to enter into the feelings of the Greeks and to adapt the new faith as far as possible to meet their needs. The earliest evangelist, Mark, wrote his Gospel for converts from heathendom, and with this object in view, very largely effaced the Jewish colouring of his tradition. Next follow in succession the Lucan writings, the Fourth Gospel, the preaching of St Peter, and finally the whole of the official apologetic literature. From these writings we derive a fairly good picture, not only of the struggle against the heathen religions, but also of the preaching of Christianity itself. But at the same time we see that Christianity does not only give but likewise receives, and that the defence of the Church is one of the strongest impulses that make for the process of Hellenization.

The attack upon the old gods keeps entirely to the lines laid down by the Jews and the Greeks themselves. Nowhere do we find any trace of original thoughts. We are here concerned with three theories of religion.

1. Under the influence of Judaism the Christians apply a coarsely materialistic theory to the Greek religion. The Jew only believes what he sees. The pictures are made by hands, the sacred animals are just animals, the sacred trees, wood, the sacred stones, stones and nothing else. But surely it is the height of folly to worship mere natural objects or the works of human art. This pitiful theory, by which it is just the religious element which is hidden away out of sight—*i.e.*, the divinity that was supposed to reside in the objects—was the one that prevailed amongst Christian laymen. It can be traced back to St Paul and thence to its Jewish source, the wisdom of

Solomon. St Peter's preaching knows no other. Even Aristides, who had been taught better things by the philosophers, follows it, at least when he is examining barbarian religions. Where this theory prevails we may safely assume Jewish culture.

2. The Christians borrowed another, a rationalistic, theory of religion from the philosophers. It is known as Euhemerism. A very cursory examination is sufficient to show, of course, that the pictures and God are not the same, that the picture has been consecrated to God. But the gods appear, and this, especially in the Homeric poems, as 'over-men,' of whose birth, suffering, and death we are often told. The objects of this worship were therefore the mighty men of old. This theory we meet with first of all in Aristides. He came across it in some Greek text-book.

3. The most important theory practically was that of the demons, in which both Jews and Greeks agreed, the only difference being that the Greeks conceived the demons to be demi-gods of a neutral character, while the Jews looked upon them as evil spirits. The Jewish theory of demons recognizes the reality of the heathen religion and its outward effects, but explains them as a great temptation to lead men away from God. The starting-point is always the fact of prophecy and of miracles. Hence the whole world is looked upon as a great kingdom of demons, while the heathen ritual is merely one favourite province thereof. This was the only theory that practically governed men in their every-day relations. St Paul was already acquainted with it. It was based upon the Greek Bible The hall-mark of

Christianity was the knowledge that only demons, and not true gods, were the creators of Paganism, and that Christ has freed us from them. He freed us when He was upon earth by repeatedly casting out devils. He still frees us by means of exorcisms. That is why the name of Jesus is uttered over the convert at baptism, in order that He may cast the devils out of us.

The question now was how to set up the new Christian God in the place of the fallen heathen divinities. In their establishment of monotheism, the Christians, from the very first, simply followed in the lines laid down by the philosophers as soon as they attempted to produce any arguments beyond those furnished by the Old Testament. This subject rather belongs, therefore, to our next chapter, in which we are to consider the general influence of philosophy upon the Christians. The defence of Jesus, on the other hand, entirely enters into the conceptions of the popular religion. Jesus Christ is opposed to the old gods as the new and stronger God. That is the meaning of the "Divinity of Christ." The idea arose amongst the heathen, and must be conceived of in antithesis to the heathen gods.

One thing we must grasp clearly. The notion is as little Jewish as it possibly can be. The Jews simply have no room for a second being called God in the strict sense of the word. "The alone true God," "The only God," as John and Clement call Him, that is Jewish. The Messiah is a man chosen or sent by God—hence in any case a created being. Therefore the strict Jewish Christianity, and Mohammed-

anism, which is based upon it, have always entirely excluded this thought. It is true that the Jew, Paul, goes a long way beyond the humanity of Jesus when he discovers Him from time to time in the Lord of the Old Testament, and says that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. But, firstly, he never calls Him God himself, and he shows us in his chief eschatological chapter how strongly he clings to monotheism. Secondly, he is anything rather than a Jew in his Christological exegesis of the Old Testament. Here he leaves all Jewish tradition on one side and gives free vent to his mythological vein: whence he derives it it would be hard to tell. No road leads up to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ from the Old Testament and from Rabbinism.

But amongst the heathen, apotheosis was exceedingly common. The number of their deities is not limited, and they range by the most varied series of degrees imaginable down to the hero who is deified. The characteristic signs of a god are always considered to be great power, miracles, and prophecy. For the Jews a miracle proves the truth of a doctrine, for the Gentiles it denotes the presence of a god on earth. Hence St Paul was twice taken to be a god, at Lystra and at Malta, because of the miracles that he performed. So, too, the Roman centurion exclaims beneath the Cross, "This was a Son of God!" because of the miracles which accompanied the death of Jesus. The Jewish word "Son of God" has, by itself, the sound of hero or demi-god in Greek ears.

And so as soon as it came to the Greeks, accompanying the pictures of the great worker of miracles,

over whom death had no dominion, faith in the divinity of Christ arose at once. It is the original faith of the Gentile Christians. Christological dogma did not grow by slow additions, but, on the contrary, by the Jewish and antagonistic subtraction from this popular belief. The Gentile Christian immediately gives Jesus a place in his worship. He sings his "carmen Christo quasi deo." The apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are the clearest authority that we possess for this popular belief. Throughout these writings the new God Christ is contrasted with the heathen gods. It matters not whether He is called God or Son of God.

Partly consciously, and partly unconsciously, the Christian apologetic accommodated itself to this faith from a very early date. The first condition for this was the transformation of the picture contained in the Gospels in a universalistic sense. Paul had already ascribed to Jesus' death an atoning power for the whole world. And now the whole world must be described as the object of the affections of the living Jesus of the Gospels. This was effected first of all by simply supplementing the national Jewish activity of Jesus by the command to go and preach to all people, which was ascribed to the risen Lord. That is the procedure adopted by our three Synoptists, in all of whom a certain hiatus is noticeable between the real history and the theory. Next, John paints his picture without any concern for the actual history. It begins with the Logos, the mediator both for creation and revelation to the whole world, and throughout proclaims Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, while it reaches its height

in the scene when the Greeks come to Jesus and Jesus declares how He, being lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Himself. This proclamation of universalism was necessary in order that the Greeks might be able to say "The new God did not come for the Jews in a little corner of Syria, but for the world, and for us."

In the next place, Jesus had to be proved a stronger God than the demons. St Mark's Gospel undertakes this proof by presenting Jesus to all the world as the Son of God, the worker of miracles, the conqueror of the demons, and the prophet. Hence the important position here assigned to miracles, and amongst the miracles, especially to the victory over the demons. The empire of Satan is at an end. Legions of demons fall into the sea. Jesus is Lord over nature. He stills the storm. He makes the sea to be firm land. His power knows no limits. Mark naturally did not picture all this to himself after the same heathen fashion in which it must have worked upon his readers.

Soon after this (by analogy with other myths of the gods) the parentage of the Son of God is ascribed to God and a mortal woman. Such is the account in the opening chapters of the First and Third Gospels. The myth sprang up amongst Gentile Christians. A great proportion of the old Jewish Christians rejected it, and rightly, for it did away with the descent from David, which was a matter of such importance to them. The Christian spirit has, to be sure, been at work at this myth, and has removed from it every trace of sensuality and anthropomorphism. It is not God Himself but God's Holy Spirit

who begets Jesus. But even as early as Justin the analogy had been discovered: "When we say that He was born of a virgin, you may consider that as something which He shares with Perseus." Celsus, the adversary of the Christians, finds still further analogies in Amphion, Aeacus and Minos, which examples he puts into the mouth of the Jew who appears as the opponent of the Christians. It is not for nothing that the story of the miraculous conception became so popular among the Gentile Christians: God's Son is He whose Father is God and no man.

The Christology of the Fourth Gospel has, it is true, borrowed the idea of the Logos from philosophy. Besides this, consideration for the feelings of the Jews leads the author to emphasize the subordination of Christ to God. But concealed beneath the philosophy and the anti-Jewish apologetic, the popular belief in the new God that has appeared upon earth can be discovered in all its power. The miracles of Jesus—all of them the miracles of an omnipotent deity—are conceived of as a proof of the Messiahship for the Jews, and for the Greeks as a revelation of the Godhead. When Thomas sees the crucified Saviour with the stigmata risen from the dead, he cries out, as any Gentile might, "My Lord and my God!" And the evangelist would like to bring all people to make this same confession. All men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, *i.e.*, just as God, and such is the will of the Father Himself. Then there is the mantic art, second sight and prophecy, which, next to the miracles, are a proof of the divinity. Like a God, Jesus looks into the hearts of all men, so that no man needed to tell

Him what there was in man. He knows all the past history of the Samaritan woman with whom He talks, and knows from the very first that Judas is destined to betray Him. If He asks it is only to test those whom He questions. No god has a clearer insight. Neither need He eat or drink. His food is obedience to the Divine Will. If He asks for water to drink, then the want is but apparent, and the request is really made to introduce the conversation. Even if He prays it is but for the sake of those that hear and not for Himself. He has conquered death. Heaven is His home: thence He came; thither He shall go. Throughout His sayings it is the God that has descended from heaven that we hear speaking. Hence, too, He is at once introduced as a God in the prologue to the Gospel. Thus it is that the evangelist writes for the Greeks. His successor herein is the author of the apocryphal Acts of St John, where the hints of the author of the Fourth Gospel are exaggerated in an absurd and fantastic manner. So, for instance, he says that often when one followed after Jesus as He walked along He left no footprints behind Him. As one felt His body it would be at one time quite impalpable, so that one's hand simply passed through it, and at another hard. It is not merely because of a higher canon of taste that the evangelist omits features such as these, which entirely destroy the humanity of Jesus. He himself, as opponent of the Gnostic Docetæ, is thoroughly in earnest in his belief in the incarnation of the Logos. And yet, is his Jesus much else than a phantom? He needs neither to eat nor to pray, nor to ask for information, nor to die. Even in his

own case the popular docetic belief and the anti-docetic theory are balanced against each other.

Prophecy and miracles together formed the proof of the divinity of Christ. For John is just as far removed from an ethical conception of the divinity of Christ as the whole of the rest of Christian antiquity after him. The doing of God's will, to whatever degree of perfection one may attain, is still something human. It is man's duty. It is at most important for St John in so far as a sinful man cannot be God's instrument. Indeed, the ethical conception of Christ's divinity only came to be entertained when men began to find miracles a stumbling-block, and were yet loth to abandon the title of God. For St John God is the highest hyperphysical force. Consequently a human being upon earth can only prove himself to be divine by manifestations of this force. It was not because he felt the impression of Christ's moral splendour, but because he marvelled at the conquest of death by life, that St Thomas uttered the exclamation, "My God!" It is not because of His moral supremacy that all men are to honour the Son as God, but because He does His Father's work, because He raises the dead and comes to judge the world. So, too, the Son's unity with the Father is not merely the unity of a loving will, but the unity of power. No demon can take those that are His out of His hand, for otherwise he would have to be more powerful than God Himself, who is Lord of all. He that hath seen the Son seeth the Father, because the Son does the Father's mighty works. This same divine, miraculous power is to do still greater works through the disciples, but not in order that they too

may appear as bearers of the Divinity, but in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son, in honour of the divinity of Christ, in whose name these wonderful works are done by the disciples. In appealing, therefore, to the miracles, and the miracles alone, as the proof of Christ's divinity, all later apologists faithfully follow the example of St John.

The greatest obstacle to belief in Jesus' divinity was His death, just as it seemed impossible to harmonize it with His claim to the Messiahship. Hence the frequent recurrence to this subject in the anti-Jewish apologetic. Justin did, it is true, find analogies for the death, too, in Greek mythology. There was Asclepius struck by lightning, Dionysus dismembered, Heracles burnt on the funeral pyre, and all these were worshipped as gods or the sons of God. This clever discovery had, however, not been made by the earlier apologists. They strained every nerve to harmonize the death of Jesus with His divinity. They succeeded in doing so by adopting the same method as in the anti-Jewish apologetic, by a brilliant description of the Resurrection, by multiplying the miracles and the instances of fulfilled prophecies in the story of the Passion, by emphasizing the voluntariness of the death. Many Gentile Christians would have preferred to have denied the death of Jesus altogether. His death was only outwardly apparent. According to the Acts of St John it is only for the populace that He is crucified, while at the same time He appears to His disciples in glory. But this consequence of the "divinity of Christ" was at once indignantly rejected as a Gnostic error. We may

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account for the moderate position adopted by the Christian apologists with reference to the death of Jesus as a reaction against this extreme exaggeration.

Whilst the other apologists were satisfied with proving the physical superiority of Jesus over the old gods, the Fourth Gospel alone attempted to give a clear answer to the question what gifts God had brought men down from heaven. His answer was shaped to meet the needs of the Greek world. Chiefest of all the gifts was that of truth or knowledge, light, illumination. Such conceptions were current even amongst the Jewish proselytes. This, too, is when we find mention of the opposites, light and darkness, truth and lies, knowledge and ignorance. With these conceptions John as well as the Jews would describe monotheism—the worship of the only true God—and the knowledge of the lies of the demons. The only thing which is both novel and great is the way in which these privileges are here conceived of as gifts of God through Christ. Whilst in many other apologists monotheism and faith in Christ lie side by side without any apparent connection, the Fourth Gospel laid a great Christocentric foundation for the whole faith in God, and strongly emphasized St Paul's statement that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the alone true God.

The next great gift which Christ brought the Greeks from heaven was everlasting life, *i.e.*, immortality, or rather the present assurance of the certain possession of the same. That, too, was a great source of comfort for the Greeks, facing the future as they did with such hesitation, scepticism, and fear. The tangible proof was furnished by the

resurrection of Jesus and by the preceding raising of Lazarus from the dead.

It was only amongst the Gnostics that the pure doctrine of the divinity of Christ was maintained. In the Church it was counted as a heresy just because of the Gnostics and with deference to the accusations of the Jews. This popular belief, however, in the appearance of the new god constitutes the kernel of the new Christology. A striking proof of this assertion is furnished by Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians. The virginity of Mary and her birth and the death of the Lord remained concealed from the Prince of this world. They were three mysteries which spoke aloud in the stillness of God. How, then, were they revealed to the ages? A star appeared in the heavens brighter than all other stars, and the light thereof was inexpressibly great, and its strangeness spread consternation. But all the other stars, together with the sun and the moon, formed a circle round this star, yet its light exceeded the light of all the others. And the hearts of men failed them, for they could not tell whence this strange star appeared unto them. Henceforth all magic was at an end and all the bonds of wickedness were snapped asunder. Ignorance was dethroned, the old reign was no more, now that God Incarnate had come to give men the newness of everlasting life. Nowhere, even in the New Testament, is the significance of Christ for the downfall of Paganism formulated as clearly as here.

The question now presents itself, How was Christianity related to the religion of the mysteries?

There were likely to be several points of agreement. Both tended to fix the attention on the world to come, to attach importance to holy rites and moral purity, and to seek happiness in the common life. Did not this imply so close an inner relationship that the outer forms were bound to be exchanged mutually?

From the very first the Gospel courted publicity and claimed to be a message intended for the light of common day. A city set upon a hill cannot be hid. The candle is not intended to be placed under the bushel but on the candlestick. Even though we begin with whispering in the ear and speaking in the chamber, yet the end clearly aimed at is to preach on the roof and in the public streets. And just as the Gospel courts publicity, so its scope is universal. Why, it is the exact opposite of everything that is exclusive. It abolishes the privileges of the learned and throws its doors wide open to the simple layman. There is nothing esoteric in the preaching of Jesus from first to last. It is one of the great and comforting features in His character that the love of mystery and aristocratic self-sufficiency are alike alien to Him. Hence Christianity and the mysteries are mutually exclusive.

So, too, the aim of the disciples of Jesus and of St Paul was not to found a sect, but to gather together and to increase the people of God. By their choice of the Old Testament as their sacred book they declared their intention of remaining faithful to the public religion. Their adoption of the name 'Church' points in the same direction. For the Church is something public, something which em-

braces all men alike in opposition to every private society. The enthusiastic manner in which the earliest Christian apologists defended this public character of Christianity in opposition to all secret sectarianism is very admirable. The author of the Acts never wearies in his attempt to prove that the Christians are merely the true people of Israel. That is why he insists on the fact that the original apostles and St Paul never abandoned the old sanctuary, the Temple, but assembled there in the sight of all men and praised God. So Paul can declare when he is brought to trial, "These things have not been done in a corner." The author of the Fourth Gospel emphasizes the public character of Christianity still more strongly. The founder is the Logos, the light of the world. When a Jewish Rabbi once visited Him secretly at night He concluded His conversation with him by the saying as to the light. That is why He appears so frequently in Jerusalem and in the Temple, that all the world may see. "I have spoken openly to all the world; in secret have I said nothing." When brought to trial He appeals to this; and as the Lord's Supper was commonly calumniated amongst the Gentiles as a secret rite defiled by horrible orgies, immorality, and cannibalism, by analogy of much that was ascribed to many mysteries, Jesus is described by the evangelist as delivering a spiritual exposition of the Sacrament in public at Capernaum, and thus he refutes the slanderous accusations. St John is followed by Justin in the two *Apologies*. His method is to set forth all the Christian doctrines and customs without the slightest reserve, and so he takes the sting out of the heathen

attack: "Study our religion; then you will convince yourselves how little reason we have for shunning the light." It may evidently be inferred from this method of Church defence that in the eyes of the Christian teachers themselves their religion was perfectly separate and distinct from the mysteries.

But for all that there was an inner resemblance between the two. In the first place, the persecution of the national Jewish Church and afterwards of the Roman Government actually forced the Christians to live, so to speak, underground in the dark and in mystery. Even the Fourth Gospel speaks of a meeting with closed doors for fear of the Jews. By positively refusing to acknowledge the public character of the Christian religion, the State itself made of Christianity a sect that shunned the light. Besides this external reason, however, there was a second, due to the essential character of the original society. Christianity was at first organized as an exclusive community. Hence its strength. It was only within these narrow limits that the teaching of Jesus could be realized. But as such a community it only possessed a limited public character. The sacrament of baptism formed a sharp dividing line between members and non-members. It was itself a sectarian form borrowed from the sect of the disciples of the Baptist. The Lord's Supper was only intended for the brethren, and the same remark applies to several other rites and customs, *e.g.*, the public confession, the kiss of brotherhood, etc. Now as Christianity spread under the form of this organization and thus became known to the Greeks and Romans, it could only appear to them to be a sect, and they then

judged it like many other sects which shunned the light, and that with good reason.

As a matter of fact a contradiction existed between the claim of Christianity to be the world religion and its sectarian form, its rites and ceremonies adapted only to a small society. We are conscious of this contradiction even at the present day as soon as we ask ourselves what place the sacraments really occupy in our national and established Churches.

As a result of the confusion caused by the rise of Gnosticism, numberless small sects appear by the side of the one sect, which still upheld its claim to be the Church. Prolonging, as nearly all of them did, a precarious existence in almost greater obscurity than the Church, they were the first to fall irrevocably under the influence of the mysteries, because from the very beginning they cultivated an exclusive aristocratic spirit and an esoteric doctrine. In opposition to this tendency the belief in the universal scope of Christ's message and its public character was the more firmly rooted, and once again this was exceedingly fortunate for the Church.

Ecclesiastical Christianity won the victory over Gnosticism, but not without submitting to the influence of the mysteries. Without themselves being conscious of it, the Christian teachers adapted themselves in many points to the opinions of their opponents in the course of their controversies and defence of the Church. It is in the development of the idea of the sacraments that we have the strongest evidence of the influence of the mysteries.

The essential characteristic of the mysteries was, of course, inherent in the sacraments from the very

first. Simple human actions are invested with mysterious attributes. They can exorcise evil spirits, become the channels of divine power, bring men into communion with the Lord on high. These opinions cannot be derived from the teaching of Jesus; they show us how Christianity in its infancy was drawn into the chaos of Oriental religions. Paul, apostle though he was of the spirit and the word, nevertheless found a place in his great theological system for the sacred rites of the first Christian community as means of salvation. For him, too, they are the definite points where Christ or His Spirit impart themselves to the community and to the individual, in order to lift them up to themselves. Baptism is incorporation into the body of Christ, the Lord's Supper the continued support from the supply of His strength. This conception, however mysterious, still retained the Christian thought that our present salvation depends upon the person of Christ. And besides this, it was effectively balanced by the preponderant ethical note in the apostle's teaching and character, which enabled him to draw moral imperatives even from the sacraments.

In the sub-apostolic age, belief in sacramental efficacy grows in proportion to the rapidity with which Christianity takes root in heathen soil. There, among the Greeks and in contact with the thoughts disseminated by the mysteries, the unseen world comes to dominate everywhere as the only true reality, filling the whole foreground of life, and baptism and the Lord's Supper are subordinated to it as mysterious initiatory rites, while at the same time the sacramental apparatus becomes ever more

and more complicated through competition with other sacraments.

The original simplicity of baptism, washing in running water and utterance of the name of Jesus, no longer sufficed. The laying on of hands was added. This addition alone, so the author of the Acts tells us, afforded a channel for the descent of the Holy Ghost. It was the prerogative of the apostles -- later, of the bishops. Somewhat later appeared the anointing with consecrated oil. If the First Epistle of St John knows the name we may conclude that the thing, too, existed either among Catholic Christians or Gnostics. Possibly the name Christ, the anointed, facilitated the reception of this rite. Ignatius refers to the anointing of Christ in Bethany, and thence derives the custom. It was, at all events, long before the time of Tertullian (to whom we owe our first treatise on baptism), possibly a century earlier, that the sacrament consisted of three separate ceremonial parts—immersion, unction, imposition of hands. We really have three sacraments united in one, or rather there are four, since the utterance of the name of Jesus has itself the efficacy of a sacrament. At the beginning of the second century baptism into the name of Jesus began to give way to baptism into the name of the Trinity, the latter practice being founded on the passage in St Matthew's Gospel which traced the formula back to Jesus Himself. But it was an innovation, for we see from the Acts that the apostles and St Paul only baptized into the name of Jesus. How and where the phrase arose we cannot tell, but we are acquainted with a transition stage.

The author of the Apocalypse knows of such as have the name of the Lamb and of the Father written on their forehead. To others he promises that they shall be pillars in the temple of God, and upon them shall be written the name of God and the name of the new Jerusalem and the name of mankind. We may here learn something of the motives which led to the growth and final victory of the Trinitarian formula. It was produced by no doctrinal theory, but by the need that men felt to be quite on the safe side through the employment of yet more powerful names. From the very first, forgiveness of previous sins and the pouring forth of God's Spirit were regarded as the gifts obtained by means of baptism. Hence it was called "birth of regeneration," "renewing of the Holy Spirit," "birth from above by water and the Spirit." New designations, 'illumination' and 'seal,' came to be added to these, the oldest, Christian names. Both were probably derived from the phraseology of the mysteries. Through wonderful illumination the convert steps forth from the kingdom of darkness and ignorance into the kingdom of light and of knowledge. Without actually naming baptism, Clement describes this solemn moment. Through Christ the eyes of our heart were opened. Through Him our ignorant and darkened understanding climbed the steep ascent into His wonderful light. Through Him the Lord wanted us to taste of the knowledge that perisheth not. Hence Justin speaks of a birth of repentance and of knowledge. We are breathing the air of the Greek mysteries. The expression 'seal' implies protection against the demons and initiation into the world to come. Long

before this Paul speaks of Christians as anointed, sealed, having the earnest of the Spirit. In the Apocalypse the one hundred and forty-four thousand Israelites are sealed in order that they may come safely through all temptations and plagues and reach the kingdom of heaven. We cannot be quite sure what the author meant by this sealing. Most probably, however, he pictured to himself that the name of God or of Jesus which exorcised the evil spirits was engraved upon the foreheads of the faithful. And now baptism itself was regarded as such a protective measure—the holy name being pronounced as well. Its efficacy can, of course, be completely destroyed or impaired; denial of the faith in time of persecution, grievous sins of the flesh, stain it; but wherever it is kept untainted it is a mighty protection against all demons and a guarantee of everlasting life. When Hermas declares that even those who died before Christ came and are now in Hades must receive the seal—the seal, he adds, is the water—since without this none can enter into the kingdom of heaven, he is looking upon baptism as the rite of initiation which alone confers upon men the blessedness of the world to come. Faith alone no longer suffices. The magic power of the sacrament is needed besides. In like manner, too, the Lord's Supper comes to be looked upon as food and drink for this life. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." Such are the words which the evangelist John puts into the mouth of Jesus, and he can only mean that the

elements received in the Lord's Supper create the spiritual, the resurrection body of the Christian. His successor Ignatius says, with perfect outspokenness, the Lord's Supper is the magic rite whereby we obtain immortality: it is the medicine which prevents our death and secures our perpetual life in Jesus Christ. Then there follows in Justin the first attempt at explaining this change of the body and blood of Christ into our own body, and the apologist reminds us at the same time of the analogy presented by the mysteries of Mithras, where, in like manner, bread and a cup of water are presented and certain invocations used when anyone is to be initiated. Naturally it is only the initiated who can fully participate in this mysterious food. "Let him that is holy draw near, and if anyone be not holy then let him repent." The saying of Jesus, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs," is applied in the Didache to the Lord's Supper.

We have traced the first steps of that fateful development which, under the influence of Greek and Oriental mysteries, made of Christianity a religion of superstition and of magic charms. True, there is no lack of Christian teachers in our period, just as little as there was in later periods, who, when they speak of the sacraments, immediately treat them as symbols and the means of inculcating moral truth, whose end and aim is the grace of God and spiritual communion with the Redeemer through these outer magical media. But in interpreting the sacraments after their own fashion, these teachers give the Christian people the right to do so after theirs—*i.e.*, to look upon them as magic rites. The only really valid argument that can be advanced in favour of the sacraments is

surely this. No religious community could continue to exist—certainly not in the age of the mysteries—without some such outer signs intended to excite the feelings and to inflame the fancy. Had Christianity not possessed baptism and the Lord's Supper from the very first, it would have derived its sacraments from some other source. In any case the purely ethical and personal religion was bound to degenerate. For here there is but one alternative. One thing is needful: either the condition of the heart or the reception of the sacred rite. When the very smallest importance is attached to the reception of the rite, there the Gospel, with its three great realities, the soul, the brethren, and God, is destroyed.

In eschatology, too, we can trace the beginnings of a further development destined to be of great consequence. Eschatology lost its abhorrence of the Greek idea of the future world and assimilated thence all that it possibly could. It is true that we have come to the time when the flood of the Jewish Apocalyptic conceptions swept over the young religion with their gigantic and fantastic imagery more than ever before. The eschatology of most of the Christian congregations has still more of a Jewish than a Greek appearance. The expectation of the kingdom of God upon earth and of the resurrection of the dead—*i.e.*, the two thoughts which are least Greek in character—still stand in the centre of the Christian hope. Even so educated a Christian as Justin is a convinced millenarian. And yet the process of Hellenization set in about the end of the century, and it is this same Justin who is our witness for it.

The process really begins in the Third Gospel, where Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which is certainly genuine, is reproduced in Greek terminology. That is where we first hear of Hades, the Greek world of the departed. It seems to consist of two divisions, separated from each other by a great chasm: there is the place of rest, where Abraham and his children are comforted, and there is the place of torment, where sinners do everlasting penance in flames. If St Luke had given names, then he would have spoken of Gehenna and of Paradise. But since when are there two divisions of Hades? The evangelist has melted into one Gehenna and Tartarus, Paradise and Elysium, hence his wonderful topography. He was not the first to do this. We find Gehenna and Tartarus used indiscriminately in monumental inscriptions and in the Sibylline oracles. As soon as a Jew or a Christian living amongst Greeks began to reflect upon the fate of the soul after death, the well-known pictures of bliss and torment, which Greek prophets, poets, and philosophers—especially those of the Orphic school—had scattered broadcast among the people, filled his shadowy Sheol.

It was especially the Greek ideas of hell which found a very early entrance into Christian eschatology. The most celebrated instance of this is in the Apocalypse of St Peter. There we read of the dark place of torment, of the different classes of sinners, and of the punishments, each undergone in an appointed place, of the torturing angels, and so forth. All these fancies are of Orphic origin, and they can be paralleled by passages from Virgil,

Plutarch, and Lucian; but they have all come to us through a Jewish-Christian medium, and thence received their last expression, both from a linguistic as well as from a theological point of view. It is in any case a comfort to think that these very conceptions of hell for which Christianity has been condemned, severely enough, are of Greek origin. Justin, too, had been struck by the likeness between the Greek eschatology and that accepted by the Church in his time. He reminds us of the teaching of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates, of the pit in Homer, and of the descent of Odysseus into the nether world, and of all who wrote on similar subjects. The only difference between the Christians and the Greeks was that in place of Minos and Rhadamanthus Christ judged the dead, and that not only the soul but also the body was punished, and that for ever. The Greek names which Justin enumerates are the representatives of this Orphic eschatology, and Homer's account of Hades is our earliest authority for the same. All of which furnishes us with an additional proof of the real connection between the two eschatologies.

A considerable difference subsisted, it is true, between the two views as to the time when the sentence was to be passed. According to the Greeks it was at death, but according to the Jews it was postponed to the judgment of the world by God. This difficulty, however, could be explained away, either by the assumption of an increase in the torments of hell after the judgment, or by their entire postponement after the same. In any case the old Jewish eschatology was not threatened with

dissolution from that quarter. The Greek conception of heaven, on the other hand, was bound to become dangerous immediately. Even before the rise of Christianity many of the Jews at Alexandria had become familiarized with the Greek doctrine of the assumption of those who were especially blessed to the gods in heaven, and had applied it to the fate of the martyrs and of other men pre-eminent for their piety. Similar doctrines began to circulate amongst certain Christians at a very early date. Here, however, they were consistent, and drew the right conclusions that bliss in heaven was incompatible with earthly joy at some later period. There was, they said, no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, or rather it had already taken place for Christians at baptism. The Pastoral letters, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, opposed this new-fashioned eschatology as a Gnostic heresy. But the "getting into heaven" finally won the day, for all that, over the Jewish hope of the kingdom of God.

The Gospel of St John would also appear to afford an instance of this Hellenization of the eschatology, although its author effectually conceals his true meaning. In the parting address to His disciples Jesus proclaims a hope of the future state which is entirely unlike that of the Jews. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know the way," *i.e.*, to the Father. This can scarcely mean anything else than that Jesus will fetch the Christians

to God in heaven, and will not Himself live upon earth. We cannot, however, be quite certain whether we have not here merely an apologetic disguise of the Jewish eschatology from which we ought to distinguish the author's own belief. The kingdom of God and the resurrection of the dead are the pillars of the Jewish eschatology, and they are likewise the sure foundation upon which the author of the Johannine writings builds up his system. In the story of the raising of Lazarus he shows us that through Christ's word of power the dead shall one day come forth with their former bodies from the tomb. Whoever holds such an opinion is far removed from any tendency to dissolve or spiritualize the Jewish eschatology. Nor would he place the emphasis that he does upon the flesh of Christ upon earth, and even after the resurrection, if the opinion that he holds about the flesh did not differ very considerably from that of those who deny the resurrection. He is really a representative of the old eschatology from first to last; only as an apologist he tried to meet the Greeks in this point as in many others by endeavouring to adapt the Christian hope for the future to their own views. Fortunately Irenæus furnishes us with a very old exegesis of the passage about the many mansions in the Father's house. It dates, in fact, from certain presbyters who were pupils of the apostles. They explained that enigmatic saying with reference to the different abodes of the blessed. According to their degree of piety they were to live after the resurrection either in heaven or in paradise or in the holy land. Here, then, we have a combination of old and new

eschatologies which may well be ascribed to John, standing as he does upon the boundary line between two different worlds.

Even the "Shepherd" of Hermas furnishes us with an example how deep an impression Greek and Roman eschatology made upon the Christians, though he is usually entirely on the side of the Jewish eschatology. An old woman appeared to him in the neighbourhood of Cumæ, and gave him revelations contained in the roll of a book. Being asked who the woman was, he answered, "The Sibyl." "Thou art wrong," was the reply; "it was the Church." Here we have a typical instance of the way in which heathen ideas passed over into Christianity. Hermas knew from Virgil's Æneid that the Sibyl of Cumæ was endowed with the knowledge of the world to come, of heaven and of hell. She was accounted by him, as well as by many Christians, to be a true prophetess. Cumæ, therefore, was the place where there were revelations. Churchman as he was, however, his imagination displaced the faith in the Sibyl. But then the Church had to appear in the guise of the Sibyl, and even occupy her dwelling. Paganism is Christianized and Christianity is Romanized.

Would it, then, have been so great a loss had the Greeks with their ideas of the future blessedness won the day over the Jewish eschatology of the Christians? Jesus Himself had striven to purify and simplify the old hope in the kingdom, and to elevate it into the domain of eternity. St Paul had continued this work of Jesus by his great theory of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. It would seem, then, to be a decided retrogression when

the Christians of the sub-apostolic age enthusiastically accept the whole mass of the Jewish apocalyptic and the wild fancies of the Greeks concerning hell, while the only doctrine which they regard as a heresy is that of the ascension of the soul to God, the highest and purest of the Greek hopes. And yet a true instinct guided the Church in this decision. That Greek doctrine was dangerous, because it meant the suppression of the social and moral elements in the ideal of the future state in favour of a merely selfish enjoyment of God by the individual soul. The future history of the Church proved over and over again how easily the selfish longing for heaven tended to make men forget their social duties here on earth. In the first age, the surrender of the old hope in the kingdom would have been tantamount to the abandonment of the faith in Providence and to the neglect of all work in the world. It was a time of conflict and of persecution. Who was to conquer, Christ or Rome? The centre of interest was in this earth. The persecutors had their portion in hell. The martyr's reward was to rule in the kingdom. If Christ only kept heaven, and the dragon retained the earth, then it availed but little to be a Christian. Jesus and St Paul would probably have fought likewise on the side of the Chiliasts. They took up their stand firmly and boldly upon this earth of ours, and there they meant to stand. That, too, is an essential part of religion.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIANITY AND HELLENISM.

CHAPTER VIII.

Greek Philosophy.

The Apostle Paul would have nothing to do with philosophy. He was still an apologist of the layman's religion. Human wisdom and divine revelation were entirely opposed to each other in his view. Long before his time, however, an alliance had been concluded between these two opposites in Alexandria and even in Palestine. As Clement of Alexandria so beautifully expresses it, the divine reason did not merely educate for Christianity the Jews through the law but the Greeks through philosophy. Philosophical and religious monotheism, philosophical and religious ethics, had met and had discovered, to their astonishment, that they were near relations. Had it not been for this alliance, Christianity had not conquered the world.

The first meeting-point was in the criticism of the old polytheistic faith. Greek philosophers had written text-books in which all the weaknesses and failings of mythology had been collected and

criticized. They had then proceeded to put forth various theories to explain the great deception, amongst others, the theory of Euhemerus. In his controversy with Apion, all that Josephus need do is simply to refer to the majority of the philosophers, especially Plato. There is no doubt that Aristides copied Greek patterns in his criticism. It is true that he says that he has the philosophers against him. It was, however, but one section of them, after all, which maintained that all the different gods proceeded in the end from one nature. In his *Apologies* Justin Martyr quotes the philosophers at every step as his authorities. By thus uniting with Greek philosophy in the removal of ignorant superstition, Christianity was able to boast at a very early date that it was a civilizing power.

The positive point of contact in monotheism was of still greater importance. Originally, it is true, Jews and Greeks attached a very different signification to the same name, for the Greeks started from the laws of nature and the Jews from the miracles of their historical past. As a matter of fact, therefore, their agreement in the use of the same formula meant the immediate and wide acceptance of the philosophical view of the world, both by Judaism and by Christianity. The process begins in the Jewish writings, even in the Old Testament itself, in the 9th chapter of the Proverbs. So, too, Philo's idea of the world as an everlasting order fulfilled by the forces of Deity is entirely Greek.

Turning to the New Testament, we find the first traces of this Greek view, though naturally still intermingled with Jewish conceptions, in the two little

apologetic speeches in the Book of the Acts (xiv. and xvii.). In the speech at Lystra, God is first introduced as the creator, and that with the current Jewish expressions. Characteristically Jewish, too, is the assertion that in the first place God occupied Himself only with Israel, and treated the heathen according to the principle of *laissez aller, laissez faire.* The whole order of nature, however, is regarded as showing forth God's lovingkindness towards the heathen, and is in so far produced as a proof ('testimony'). Here we have Greek popular philosophy in its simplest form; we can recognize it, too, by the emphasis laid on the goodness of God. The speech at Athens begins in the same way with a whole string of Jewish ideas—God the creator, criticism of the heathen religion, especially of idol worship, and then, finally, the eschatological menace. But in between these is a great deal borrowed from the Greeks. As in later *Apologies*, God is shown to be placed above all want. All the blessings of Nature, that we live and breathe, are His gifts. The heathen, too, have received their seasons and their boundaries from God, that they may seek God and find Him. Hereupon there follows the thoroughly Greek pantheistic formula, "In Him we live and move and have our being," and this is supported by the quotation from Aratus, that all men are of God's family. Even the word "the divine," the abstract term instead of the person, is a sign that Hellenism has already gained considerable ground.

Our next document, St Clement's letter to the Corinthians, is entirely impregnated with Greek popular philosophy (see especially chaps. xix., xxi.,

xxiv. *seq.*, and lx.). The Godhead there appears as Father and Creator of the whole world—a faith in God the Father which differs greatly from that of the early Christian—or as the great Demiurge and Lord of the universe. The constant and invariable order of Nature as God's work is there described at great length. The heavens stand fast through God's government (dioikesis); day and night succeed each other without let or injury. Sun and moon and stars continue in their appointed course. The earth knows its seasons and the sea its bounds. Summer and winter, spring and autumn, all follow in due course. The winds and rivers are alike governed by fixed laws, and laws likewise govern the instincts and impulses of the animal world. All this has been ordered by the Lord of the whole world, that peace and harmony may prevail, and all that He does is good. At first sight, it is true, this description of Nature resembles that of the Psalms. In both cases everything is referred back to God's own command. And yet the point of view is more Greek than Jewish. The independence of Nature is greater. Between it and God stands His unchangeable 'dioikesis.'

In chaps. xxiv. and xxv. we have the first attempt to find a rational basis for the belief in the resurrection by analogies from Nature. There is a resurrection throughout Nature, there is the change of night and day, of seed-time and of harvest. This is a proof of the greatness of God's providence. The view is further supported by the great miracle of the resurrection of the phœnix, and finally there is a sufficient, if somewhat meagre, scriptural proof from the Old Testament.

The concluding prayer is again addressed to the Demiurge of the universe, who has revealed the everlasting cosmical order by His manifestations. The prayer for princes (see page 108, *supra*) who stand under this government, is based upon this general belief in Providence.

The influence of the Greek cosmology and its optimism is especially striking at the beginning of Aristides' apology. "Through God's providence, O king, I came into the world, and as I regarded the heavens and the earth and the sea and the sun and the moon, I was amazed at the order (dioikesis) of these things. But when I perceived that the world and all that therein is, moves according to a fixed law, then I understood that He that moves it and rules over it is none other than God. For He that moves is mightier than that which is moved, and He that rules is stronger than those that are governed: Him therefore I call God. It is He that directs all things." A principle of Aristotle is here directly taken over in a popular form. The enthusiastic admiration of the beauty of the cosmos is also thoroughly Greek.

God and the universe are bound more closely together in this Greek popular philosophy than in the Jewish faith. The belief in Providence was based upon natural religion. Lactantius could declare that it was the common property of all religions, and was firmly established before all revelation. Christianity is built up upon a rationalistic cosmology. This, however, was one of the tendencies which affected the new religion.

God and the world are rent asunder—this process goes on simultaneously with the former—the con-

ception of God is emptied of everything that is concrete and subtilized into something purely transcendental, into the negation of the world. One can only say of God what He is not. Thereby religion is forced to take refuge in flight from the world and mysticism, if it will still retain God.

Here, too, the Jews had shown the way. Philo, and after him Josephus, had drawn up long catalogues of the negative predicates of God—unbegotten, unchangeable, needing nothing, unknown in His essence, incomprehensible, without qualities. Josephus declares expressly that the Jewish conception of God is none other than the philosophical, such as was taught by Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, the Stoics, and nearly all the philosophers. Here, as everywhere, the Christians had merely to follow in the path which had been marked out for them by the Jews.

We find the first traces of this negative conception of God even in New Testament writings, in the Pastoral epistles, and in St John. There God is called "the King of the ages, the incorruptible, the invisible, the only true God," or "the blessed and only potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see." "God no man hath seen." How widely removed are these Greek thoughts from the earlier Jewish realistic faith in God, the faith of men whose greatest delight was in the theophanies!

Even Hermas has taken up into his short commandment of faith in God the formula, "Who comprehends all, but is Himself not comprehended." An apologetic tract dating from the beginning of

the second century, the sermon of St Peter, gives us the earliest Christian catalogue with the negative predicates of God. The God of the Christians, we here read, is a God who was at the beginning before all things and has power over the end. He is the invisible, who seeth everything; the incomprehensible, who comprehends everything; who needeth nothing, whom all need: the inconceivable, the eternal, the imperishable, the uncreated, who created all by His word of power.

Aristides, who is acquainted with the sermon of Peter, describes God as Him that is without beginning, the invisible, the immortal, who needeth nothing, who is exalted high above all passions and defects, such as wrath and sorrow and ignorance. Through Him all things coexist. He needeth neither sacrifices nor offerings, nor anything that is visible, but all need Him. Later apologists simply follow Aristides with shorter or longer catalogues.

Such was the origin of a contradiction which crept into the Christian faith in God. For the stoical theory of immanence, to which the doctrine of the dioikesis corresponds, and the Platonic theory of transcendence, which finds its expression in the negative predicates, are irreconcilable. Immanence implies the complete unity of God with the cosmos. Transcendence implies the conception of God as the entire negation of the world. This contradiction very frequently escaped notice. God was thrust out of sight far behind the world, and yet the belief in a constant divine providence is not abandoned. Where the inconsistency, however, was noticed, there the

doctrine of intermediary beings arose, which furnished a proof of the divine power in the world of phenomena without locating the eternal in the finite.

Angels and demons were the connecting link between the remote God and the visible world for the popular belief. Philosophy substituted the 'Logoi' or the 'Logos' and the Holy Spirit for the angels.

Here Philo had paved the way for the Christians. He himself was a Platonist, feeling himself a stranger in this phenomenal world while his true home was in the world of ideas. He did not introduce the conception of Logos into Jewish thought. Stoic and Aristotelian philosophers had done that before him. But just as he appropriated the work of his Jewish predecessors to a very large extent, even where they followed other Greek philosophers, so he took up the conception of the Logos from this tradition, and adapted it to Platonic modes of thought by defining it more sharply, and by individualizing it both as regards God and as regards the world. Even in Philo we find the Logos called the "second God," and the Old Testament was interpreted with reference to him.

Nor was Philo the only forerunner in this direction.

In the Wisdom of Solomon the spirit of wisdom is described, in accordance with the Stoic doctrine, as an infinitely subtilized, universal reason that pervades everything and is yet distinct from God Himself.

Of Christian writers, St Paul was the first to look upon Christ as such an intermediary being, higher than all the angels, yet lower than God Himself, nor was the term Logos as yet applied to Him. It was

no philosophical problem that had moved St Paul to take this view. He wished to find Christ in the whole of the Old Testament. This was only possible by depriving God and the angels of a great portion of the sphere of their activity. Jesus, however, thereby comes to be the God that actively works in the world.

Then the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews developed his Pauline theology by means of conceptions taken directly from Alexandrine sources. The world was created through the Son of God. He is the reflection of God's glory and the impress of His substance, upholding all things by the word of His power. In the 45th Psalm He is called God —of course as Son, *i.e.*, as God in a secondary sense. The very word 'reflection' is used as an attribute of wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon. But this disciple of Philo did not venture as yet to apply the word 'Logos' to Jesus.

In the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, however, this name appears clearly and unmistakably. "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was a God." Dependence on Philo's writings is possible, yet it is not even absolutely necessary to presuppose it. The cosmological character of the opening sentences clearly points to a philosophical source. Between God and the world stands the Logos. On the one hand He is with God, on the other everything is created by Him. He is called 'a' God, but not 'the' God; in exactly the same way Philo distinguished between God with and God without the article, and supported this distinction by Old Testament proofs. The most

suitable name is Son of God, or rather the only Son, in distinction from the 'children' of God, who only become children by His mediation. He is not only the creator of the world but its supporter, as in Him is all life.

Now the fact is of great importance that the man who introduced the Logos into the Gospel was not himself a philosopher, nor did the problem of the mediation between God and the world cause him any anxiety or difficulty. It is for apologetic and not philosophical ends that he makes use of the theory of the Logos. If, therefore, he ascribes a cosmological signification to the Logos, notwithstanding all this, then he must have been determined to do so by a firmly established tradition. It was an accepted theory — derived either from Philo or elsewhere — that the Logos had created and supported the world. The evangelist accepts this view in order to make it the basis for the transition to the apologetic, which is the sole aim of the whole of his prologue.

He lived at a time when the Gnostics had already begun to interpolate their endless genealogies of æons between the purely negative first cause of all things and the existing world. The belief in the existence of intermediary beings between God and ourselves had naturally been strengthened in consequence. The evangelist himself reduces the number of these intermediary beings to one — to that one who was most intelligible to the Greeks. The fact that he does this in a Gospel constitutes the boldness of his act.

It was the celebrated passage in the Gospel of St

John which established the supremacy of the theory of the Logos in the Church. We find a reference to it as early as in Justin Martyr. We read, he says, in one of the memoirs of the apostles of Jesus: "He was the only Son of the Father of all, begotten of Him in a unique manner as Logos and Power."

The position that Justin occupies with regard to the Logos theory is at bottom that of his great teacher. He uses it for apologetic purposes. He has no interest whatever in its cosmological aspect. It is a traditional doctrine, and no new thesis of Justin's, that God created and ordered the world by the Logos. It is only in one point that we recognize that we are no longer dealing with the earliest age. The manner in which the Logos proceeds from God has come to be the subject of reflection, and no wonder, when we remember the interminable speculations of the Gnostics as to the procession of the æons from the First Cause. Justin finds the closest analogy in fire. Just as from one fire a second is kindled without any diminution of the former, so the Logos proceeds from God as a second divine being, and yet God Himself does not suffer any loss thereby. He decidedly rejects the comparison of the Logos to a sunbeam, which the sun sends forth as it rises and again draws back as it sets, because it destroys the personal individuality of the Logos.

It was inevitable, if God disappeared behind the world so completely that all His government was effected by intermediary beings, that matter should all the more appear to have an independent existence, and its origin become a problem for Christian teachers.

Once again it was the Jews who had framed the

theories with the help of Greek conceptions, and the Christians had taken them over. It would seem that they developed the doctrine of the creation as a bringing into being of the previously non-existent in the interest of monotheism.

The earliest statement of this theory is to be found in the second book of the Maccabees: "Look up to heaven and on the earth, and when thou hast seen all things therein, know thou that God created them out of the things that were not (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων), and that thus the race of men arose." This is to be the basis of the faith in a life after death.

This theory found early acceptance with the Christians. St Paul calls God Him who summons into being that which was not (τὰ μὴ ὄντα). He is thinking of the awakening of the dead, but the same remark applies to the creation. The Epistle to the Hebrews formulates the belief in creation in accordance with this theory: By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath been made out of things which do not appear (μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων). Hermas, too, enunciates the same theory in the First Commandment: "It is God who created all things, and perfected them, and made all things out of that which was not so that it was." Although Hebrew in origin, this theory is Greek in form. We are reminded that Plato calls matter the non-existent (μὴ ὄν).

A second theory supposed matter to be eternal but in a chaotic condition, and caused the cosmos to arise through God's creation from chaos. This theory might be based on Gen. i., "The earth was

waste and void." We find it amongst the Jews in the Wisdom of Solomon, where we read of wisdom, "He created the world out of shapeless matter." Justin is the first Christian author, as far as we know, to accept it: "In the beginning God, of His goodness, created all things out of shapeless matter. By transforming shapeless matter, God created the world."

The two theories, creation out of nothing, creation out of the chaos, are not in reality very dissimilar. Philo, *e.g.*, uses words of the first theory, and thinks according to the second. If only the thought of the creation is strictly preserved the rest is a matter of indifference.

The early Christians did not really elaborate any cosmologies. The story of Genesis was quite sufficient for them. The need had not as yet arisen. The world was God's. This was the unshaken faith of the Church. It was only the Gnostics, who separated the redemption from the creation, who were obliged to ransack Greek philosophy, and hunt after cosmological questions.

Greeks, Jews, and Christians thus finding a common meeting ground in their monotheistic faith, the horizon of the early Christians was immensely enlarged. They suddenly became aware of the fact that the Gentile world was by no means the God-forsaken, devil-deluded mass of corruption which it had before been held to be. In its monotheistic philosophy it possessed much that was closely akin to the truth. The same conclusion was reached by an even superficial examination of Greek ethics. Jewish laws and Stoic

ethics had long ago met and concluded an alliance at Alexandria. The four Greek cardinal virtues are praised in the Wisdom of Solomon, in the fourth book of the Maccabees, and by Philo. Even St Paul had adopted ethical conceptions from the popular philosophy, such as reason, nature, and conscience, nor had the idea of the law written on the heart of man, which was so widely prevalent amongst both Greeks and Jews, repelled him. He and his successors discovered that however Christian life might differ from heathen, there was a very far-reaching theoretical agreement in the fundamental moral conceptions, in what was to be called good and evil.

Now the more firmly this knowledge of a certain relationship between Christianity and all that was good and sound in Hellenism was established amongst Christian teachers, the more eagerly were apologetics bound to attempt to profit by the relationship. But one more bold step was needed and the divine element would be recognized even in non-Christian religions. Hence arose a twofold task for apologetics. The foundation of the relationship between the Christian and non-Christian must be proved, and at the same time care must be taken that the superiority of Christianity should no longer be questioned. The absolute claims advanced by the Church must be reconciled with the relative rights of so-called natural religion.

One great obstacle stood in the way. There was the old theory set up by St Paul of the Spirit as the exclusive possession of the Church. Did not the Christians feel themselves from the very first in direct opposition to the world around them? Their

thoughts, feelings and experiences appeared to them to be something altogether peculiar, which at first only occasioned contradiction and revealed itself in this contradiction as something which had its origin beyond this world. Based upon this conviction, which was commonly held by all Christians, St Paul set up the theory that the natural man neither understands nor can understand the things of the Spirit. In spite of the vigorous exclusiveness which this theory assumes in its ecclesiastical dress, it reveals that feeling of possessing something peculiar and all-powerful without which Christianity would never have made its way through the world. But the whole edifice began to totter when apologetics suddenly appealed to the direct opposite, to the relationship with that which was outside the Church. All that was characteristic of Christianity threatened to be held by an exceedingly precarious tenure.

As was to be expected, the new thoughts were at first firmly established side by side with the old ones, without expelling them or even weakening them. We possess a very wonderful document which sets us in the very midst of this transition, revealing as it does the old exclusive spirit and the new assimilating tendencies. It is the Gospel of St John.

From one point of view this writing is as clear a piece of evidence as we possess of the narrow and sectarian spirit in early Christianity. The theory of the Spirit here assumes the most exclusive shape. Whilst other Christian teachers—the author of the First Epistle of St Peter and of the letter of St Clement—readily assume that the Christian spirit spoke from the Old Testament prophets, John

declares that the Spirit did not exist at all before Christ's ascension. It is not possible to confine the Spirit more rigorously within the bounds of the Christian Church (and along with the Spirit the higher knowledge). Hence the unbridged chasm between church and world in John xiv.–xvi. It is only to the Church that Jesus sends the spirit of truth. "The world cannot receive Him, because it neither beholdeth Him nor knoweth Him. Ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you." This passage we may illustrate by the conversation between Jesus and the Jewish Rabbi Nicodemus, in which Christ and the Jew stand opposed to each other as spirit and flesh. Only he that is baptized and has received the Spirit is able to grasp the Christian mysteries. To one outside the Church they are all folly; he cannot even understand the Christian language, and stumbles along from one misunderstanding to another. To take the birth from above as implying above all a moral experience, is to interpret this conversation wrongly. The moral element is comparatively unimportant. A man may be moral even before he becomes a Christian. All the emphasis is laid upon knowledge, upon the understanding. Nicodemus is the type of a Jew who lacks the one thing needful in spite of all his wisdom—the open mind for the Christian faith. This mind is only to be acquired within the Church. These are thoughts similar to those of St Paul in First Corinthians. They exclude all apologetics if followed out consistently. It is the early Church which thus speaks.

But this narrow theory of the Spirit has its exact

counterpart in the Logos doctrine of the prologue. There we have apologetics, and with what grand liberty of thought. There is a divine revelation even outside the Christian Church. First of all, amongst the Jews, the people of the Logos' "own possession," where patriarchs and prophets both heard and saw some fragments of the Divine Revelation. But not only there. The Logos is the light of men. He lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world long before the appearance of Christ. All the Divine Revelation, all the truth that existed in the world and still exists, may be traced back to the same Logos whom the Christians honour. The tragic sum total of history is, it is true, clearly set forth by the prologue. The Divine Revelation met with resistance; the world did not recognize the Logos. The mere fact of the existence of the Gentile world taken as a whole sufficiently proves this. Israel's history, too, is rather a record of resistance to revelation than of faithful acceptation. And yet there were children of God before the life of Jesus upon earth. Christianity is nothing new: it is as old as, nay, older than the world itself. All that is reasonable in the world is divine, and its source is revelation. But wherein, then, does the advantage of Christianity consist? In it alone the Logos became flesh, so that the full divine glory became visible to the eyes of men and was handled by their hands. The great prerogative which Christianity possesses above all other religions is the overpowering evidence of the divine in the person of Jesus. Therefore it is the completion, the conclusion, of the whole history of revelation.

This method of apologetics was only rendered possible by a Greek conception, the Logos. The evangelist presupposes that his readers are familiar with the idea of the Logos. That is why he has hopes of being able to lead them to Christ. As one can only come to Christ within the Church, the object of the apologetics is clear. If you wish to attain to the complete possession of the Logos, and be altogether reasonable, then become Christians.

These thoughts of the prologue do not recur in the course of the narrative. The author shows his good taste in not putting his own theories into Christ's mouth. But in other ways he remains true to his apologetic standpoint. He ascribes to non-Christian ethics a preparatory position: it is a school to lead to Christ. That also was a bold innovation. It is true that St Paul had once theoretically conceded the point that there might be heathen who fulfil the law. But his only object in making this concession was to abate the pretensions of the Jews to the exclusive possession of the law. Practically he condemns all heathen without exception as lost sinners, in whom dwells nothing good, who entirely depend upon the Spirit of Christ in their Church for the power to fulfil the divine will.

The majority of Christians assumed as a matter of course that all heathen were 'unrighteous,' 'sinners,' that only Christians could do that which was good. A consequence of this was that the heathen began to speak of the Christians as of a company of criminals that shunned the light and sought to escape punishment, and indeed it was easy to point to many abandoned outcasts who had

obtained admission in the Church. It would seem that the author of the Lucan writings was one of the first to call attention to the danger that there lay in the conception of Christianity as a religion for sinners only. Hence in his first speech to the Gentiles, St Peter declares: Everywhere he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him and can become a Christian. The fourth evangelist goes a good deal further when he describes Christianity simply as the religion of all that is good and healthy. Just as Logos and Spirit above, however, so now the recognition and the rejection of a non-Christian morality strive violently for the mastery. The farewell speeches of Jesus to the disciples put forward the old proposition: "as the branch apart from the vine cannot bring forth any fruit," so the Christian without Jesus can do nothing, or apart from the ecclesiastical faith there can be no true morality. But many passages of the twelve first chapters intended for the non-Christian world speak a quite different language. The existence of good people outside of the Church is a necessary presupposition here. "Every one that doeth ill hateth the light and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reproved; but he that doeth the truth cometh to the light that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God." Hence the absence of all emphasis on the forgiveness of sins in the sayings of Jesus. Mention is, of course, made of the fact, for that the world needs saving is still as true as ever. But yet Jesus is far from being the Saviour of sinners as He was in the Third Gospel. Plainly and unmistakably

the author appeals to all sound moral natures in the invitation: He that doeth God's will shall recognize the divine nature of Christianity. It is just such pure and noble characters as Nathaniel that the Father draws to the Son, *i.e.*, suffers to become Christians.

Wherein, then, it may very naturally be asked, does the advantage of Christianity consist, if there are those that work righteousness even outside the Church, and yet the road to blessedness is through the Church alone? The author would probably answer that the vision of the kingdom, the gift of everlasting life, the resurrection of the dead, the close communion with God, do in any case continue to be divine gifts which the doing of the divine will neither gives by itself nor deserves. Obedience to God which manifests itself in the moral life is, it is true, a condition of blessedness, but is not blessedness itself. Such is the opinion of all the early Christians, the simple proof of which is their eschatology. Therefore for the sake of future blessedness, even those that are morally sound still have need to become Christians. And besides, we need but look at the First Epistle of St John to see how high an opinion the evangelist personally entertained as to the gift of forgiveness.

A Christian is a man who has received forgiveness. St John's final opinion is surely this, then: that life without Christ is entirely sinful, if even life with Christ never roots out sin. The statements, therefore, about the naturally good who come to the light have to be limited as far as the principle itself is concerned. They have only an apologetic value. But for all that, this instance of an apology of Chris-

tianity without any theory of sin, simply on the basis of the attractive power of the good, is very striking.

The peculiarity of the Johannine theology is just this, that Logos and Spirit are placed side by side in it and nowhere mediated. On the one hand, we have a perfectly open mind for the world and wide sympathies; on the other, extreme narrowness, and both are harboured by the same man. He stands at the turning-point of the ages. For him the old sectarian spirit in Christianity still resists any attempt at an approach towards the world. But at the same time his apologetic instincts and the desire to gain converts cause him to go out beyond all these narrow boundaries. In the same writing we have philosophy and its antinomy. And such is ever the way with those writers to whom it is vouchsafed to exercise a widespread influence over widely different natures.

Within a few years of the date of John a likewise unknown author writes the sermon of St Peter. He speaks of Jesus therein as 'the law' and 'reason.' This apologist can scarcely have been thinking of the Jewish law when he uses the word law. The fact that he couples law with reason prevents our making this assumption. It is the law which all men possess and know, the sum of moral knowledge which the then world presupposed in every man. When Jesus therefore was called Reason and Law, the author meant to speak of Him as the ideal of all religion and moral knowledge.

We find this view set forth at some length in Justin, the philosophical successor of St John. His apologetics deal with the conception of the Logos, the

Dialogue with Trypho rather with the idea of the law. By this time, however, the consequences were drawn from St John's apology. The theory of the Spirit was dropped. This result followed necessarily from the altered position of Christianity in the world. The doctrine of the Spirit suited its earlier sectarian existence with its aversion to the world. It was abandoned when letters were addressed by the Church to the Roman emperors seeking their protection, for to them this appeal to the spirit of the Christians was bound to appear a childish mistake. The question now was how Christians could defend themselves against the world while using the world's own weapons. But the old theory of the Spirit was likewise rendered untenable by the custom of disputation with Jewish Rabbis. He that appeals to the Spirit has no right to engage in disputation. He cannot do it. The necessary conditions for disputation — an intellectual form of duelling — were the employment of the same weapons, the knowledge of the Scriptures, a right exegesis, and the drawing of right conclusions. Of course, if we possessed devotional or even anti-gnostic writings of Justin's, writings intended to be read within the Church, we should very probably infer that Christians still appealed, and that constantly, to the Spirit. But such appeal was found to disappear from the apologies and disputations.

Justin's remarks about the Logos look like a learned exposition of the prologue of St John. For Justin, too, the Logos is the light of all men. Justin, however, consciously applies this statement to Greek philosophy, of which St John had not as yet thought.

Reason dwells in every man. All that happens reasonably is an effect of the Logos—Christ. The Logos cannot be traced more clearly in the prophets than in the philosophers, Socrates, the Stoics, the poets. In the *Second Apology* Justin adopts the Stoic expression of the spermatic Logos. But as in the case of St John, the full revelation of the Logos is only to be found within the Church. Here alone the Logos became man and took to Himself a shape. Here alone He was revealed, revealed perfect and entire and no longer partially, and that so clearly that all misunderstanding is impossible. And, besides, Justin limits his bold statements concerning the universal revelation of the Logos by the assertion, which he has taken over from the Jewish apologetic, that, after all, the Greek philosophers borrowed or stole out of the Old Testament the truths which they declared.

There is a still further development when we pass from the few scattered indications of St John concerning the morality that exists outside of the Church to Justin's clear theory. There is a natural moral law which existed in the hearts of men long before the Mosaic dispensation. The patriarchs lived in accordance therewith, and were therefore well pleasing to God. Nor were the Greek philosophers or poets without knowledge of it, for the Logos-seed taught them. This natural moral law, largely forgotten in course of time, obscured and disfigured as it had come to be, Christ restored again, and gave to it its simplest eternal expression.

These apologetics differ completely from St Paul's. The difference lies in the far larger measure of

concession that is made to the Greek world. The Christians acquire the consciousness that their religion is just as closely related to Hellenism as it is to Judaism. They agree with Greek philosophers and poets in three main points—in the monotheistic faith, in the view of the moral law and of moral freedom, and in the hope of a future life. Apologetics now start from this fact, finding powerful aid in the two Greek conceptions of Reason and Law. These are interpreted as the gifts of Christ, and the man Jesus is regarded as their incarnation and perfection. Through reason and law all men are led right up to the door of the Church. But it is only entrance into the Church that guides them to absolute truth and certainty. Nothing could be broader or more tolerant than these apologetics at the beginning, but in the end they are confined within very narrow limits. The new theory is no whit less ecclesiastical than the Pauline. Measured by a religious standard, it is far the inferior. St Paul placed redemption in the centre, here we have revelation; on the one hand we have the new life, on the other the higher knowledge. We have the apologetics of rationalism, nor is the prominent position assigned to reason fortuitous. Such a system was bound to be favourably received by the Greeks. It threatened Christianity, however, with a great danger. The new religion ran the risk of being dragged down to the merely intellectual level, and deprived in a great measure of its regenerative moral force. But a new and hopeful vista likewise opened out to it. It was only now that Christianity completely entered into the great intellectual history of mankind, finding points of contact

with all good and great thoughts, and producing in interaction with them, both giving and receiving, a new and deeper conception of God and of reality.

The unmistakable tendency on the part of apologetics to incorporate philosophical conceptions is, however, only one side of the great though gradual transformation of Christianity into a philosophy like that of Philo's. Several other phenomena point in the same direction.

Philo and Josephus had proclaimed the Jewish religion to be a philosophy long before this. But such an idea was entirely foreign to the first preachers of Christianity. For St Paul the word 'philosophy' denoted a bad, an ungodlike form of science, and such was the opinion of all Christians for a long time to come. Nearly a century passed before an ecclesiastical Christian, Justin, ventured to call Christianity the only certain and useful philosophy. But then we must remember that facts precede reflexion as a rule. Two writings that were accepted in the canon—the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel—give rise to the question whether Christianity itself was not beginning to become philosophical.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is still entirely under the Jewish Alexandrine influence. The use it makes of the Old Testament, of definitions and of dogmas, its Platonic terminology, are all philosophical. Nowhere else in the New Testament do we find such a definition of Faith as that in Heb. xi. 1, nor such dogmas as to the creation of the world and the being of God as in Heb. xi. 3–6. The

Old Testament is regarded as a mysterious book of oracles which is to be interpreted according to Platonic presuppositions. A fundamental presupposition is the distinction between two worlds, the invisible world of ideas, the type, and this present world, which is the antitype. Yonder are the heavenly realities, the patterns; here the shadows, the copies, the figures. The definition of Faith rests upon this distinction. It is a conviction regarding the invisible, *i.e.*, the certainty of the world of ideas. Only all this Platonism receives an unexpected Christian turn by the combination of the Platonic world of ideas with this eschatology. In future it is to become visible. It is through this turn that the element of hope enters into the definition of Faith. From a theoretical point of view, therefore, the Christianity of the Epistle to the Hebrews is Platonic philosophy plus Christian hope. At the same time it is perfectly clear which is the source of true life.

Now it is a question whether the Fourth Gospel also presupposes a like Greek philosophy even if it does not preach it. In favour of this view we have the fact that it became the favourite gospel of the Alexandrine philosophers.

It was by comparing St John with the Synoptists that Clement and Origen were impressed by the philosophical character of the Fourth Gospel. This we can readily understand. We need but fix our attention on two points—the facts that are no longer related of Christ, and in the next place the style of His discourses. They are for the most part of a parabolical character, such as no initiated hearer could understand; words are used in different senses;

there are definitions of God and of everlasting life. Next to His Divinity there is nothing in the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel which strikes one more prominently than the Teacher—that is, in other words, the philosopher. In the first gospels Jesus is not called the Redeemer at all, but He is described as such. In the Fourth Gospel He is not the Redeemer, but at most the teacher of the truth that He is the Redeemer. He is fond of pouring out a stream of mysteries in apparently simple language, much as did the Clement of the Stromateis a century later. Hence even the last discourses assume at times something of a cold and didactic tone. The stories of the miracles, too, resemble didactic parables. In them miracles are the outward signs of spiritual truths. The author appears to be less concerned with the wonder than with its deeper meaning. In this sense one may term the Fourth Gospel a philosophical work.

This conception, however, of the Fourth Gospel as a philosophical work to which the Alexandrines first gave currency, and which is still widely held to-day, is a radically wrong one. John's main idea, the descent of the Son of Man to reveal the Father, is unphilosophical. It is not in philosophical speculation, but in myths, that we must seek for analogies to it. The only purpose which the author sets before himself in this work is the awakening of Faith in this Son of Man who has come from heaven. True, it bears a strongly didactic character, but the truths that it teaches are those of the Church's apologetic—the dignity of Jesus, the office of Jesus, the rewards of the faithful, the punishment of the foes of the Church

—all this, and not truths of a universal philosophy. God is defined as Spirit in order to establish the superiority of Christian universalism over Jewish and Samaritan particularism. The saying as to everlasting life is anything rather than a real definition, and all the conclusions drawn therefrom as to St John's intellectualism are certainly not drawn in accordance with his true nature. Again, a philosophical character has been ascribed to the words, "Blessed are they that do not see and yet believe." Yet all that they say is that we must believe in the resurrection of Jesus without having been an eyewitness thereof. So, too, the Johannine miracles are never intended to be taken in a purely allegorical sense. The fact of their actual occurrence is the irrefragable proof of God's appearance upon earth. Luther's estimate is the right one when he speaks of the Fourth Gospel as the great gospel of the grace of God and of faith, and points to its harmony with St Paul.

On the whole, all that has been said about the influence of Hellenism upon Christianity in this epoch must be regarded as something preliminary, and therefore incomplete. It is only a beginning of the great Hellenizing of Christianity; the old piety existed side by side with it in full force, and Jewish influences are evenly balanced against Greek. And still more, Judaism, especially Hellenistic Judaism, still constantly forms the channel for Greek culture to enter into the Church itself. Yet this beginning is certainly not without importance. By the year 100 we are almost justified in saying that the germ had been formed of the complete transformation of

Christianity. To judge by externals indeed the Greeks are still called wicked heathen whose gods are demons. Whilst Christianity proclaims itself as the true Judaism it would only be regarded as the enemy of Paganism. And yet how much it borrows in the sphere of religion and philosophy alike! The Greek religion presented it with the new God Jesus, the mysteries, and the picture of hell, while Greek philosophy furnished a rational faith—a conception of the cosmos—an entirely new apologetic based upon the ideas of reason and law, the first beginnings of the treatment of Christianity as a philosophy. These accretions turned out to be both a blessing and a curse to Christendom. The new religion is dragged deep down into the depths of superstition and of magic till the living person of Jesus is almost lost in the complicated system of ecclesiastical rites and mysteries. And the evil excrescences of Greek intellectualism, sophistry, rhetorical extravagance, the love of argument, make their entry into the Churches. But at the same time the intellectual horizon of the Christians is widened, they begin to develop a view of the universe out of their faith, and to honour in the works of Greek philosophers the same divine power which spoke to them from the life of Jesus. And that rightly. For in that period of confusion, when religion and superstition were everywhere intermingled, it was Greek philosophy alone which rendered it possible for men to understand spiritual realities, such as the Gospel, in a spiritual fashion. Greek philosophy alone permanently preserved Christianity from degenerating into the lowest form of superstition into which multitudes

that thirsted for salvation and that needed redemption threatened to sink. For such multitudes any and every kind of service or mystery answered the purpose, provided it procured peace and comfort. One of the best results of the Fourth Gospel was that Christ and truth were indissolubly connected, and that thereby religion was directed beyond the wishes and needs of the individual heart to the everlasting spiritual realities, to attain to an even deeper and more living knowledge of which had been the great end of Greek philosophy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

CATHOLICISM AND GNOSTICISM.

CHAPTER IX.

The Origin of Gnosticism.

Theological inquiry has not as yet mastered the complex and intricate problem of Gnosticism. Our description must therefore confine itself carefully to the few points that have been clearly ascertained, unless it is content to assume an altogether problematical character. With the question of the origin of Gnosticism it is only concerned in a very secondary degree. Can Gnosticism be derived from the same root as Catholicism or not? Was it imported from outside sources, or does it spring out of Christianity itself?

The question can only be answered if Gnosticism itself be present to the reader's mind in bare outline. For of course it can only be a question of presenting the chief features, that which the different Gnostic sects possessed in common.

The following points are common to at least a great portion of the Gnostic schools and sects.

1. A definite principle of authority. The Spirit

is the source and norm of all knowledge which thus claims to be based upon revelation. The sacred writings play a great part—the apocryphal even more than the canonical. But it is the Spirit that decides what is divine in these books and what is not, and that alone understands the revelation contained in the sacred book. As the Old Testament is the canon of all Christians, it is exposed to the sharpest criticism and partially to rejection, or at any rate to an interpretation which is almost tantamount to rejection. In any case it is the Spirit interpreting it that is the highest authority. This holds good with respect to Jesus and the apostles. In their case, too, the Spirit decides as to the acceptation and rejection and the interpretation. Naturally the Spirit does this, not as the individual human spirit, but as a divine revelation within him.

2. A definite belief in God. The God who had hitherto been worshipped both by Jews and Christians, the Jehovah of the Jews, is not the highest God revealed by Jesus. This latter is rather a new, hitherto concealed God who is enthroned high above the world and above all spirits; high, too, above the creator of the world. He is not the God of this world, the author of men's creation and preservation, and, generally speaking, this world does not belong to Him directly. Practical consequences of this are the destruction of the faith in Providence, and the hostile, or at best indifferent, relation of the Christian to the whole of this world, to nature, to the body, to human ordinances; all of which we ought not only not to ascribe to the highest God,

but rather regard as something that has fallen away from Him.

3. A definite eschatology. Man's chief end is to return to God, who is his home, to the uppermost realm of light out of this prison-house of decadence and of exile. The creature in man, the flesh, is not capable of this return, but only that element, call it spirit or soul, which has had its birth in the celestial light. Immediately after death the soul of man is intended to set out upon its homeward journey, and to make its way upwards through the innumerable hostile spirits which fill the long interval between God and this lower earth.

4. A definite Christology. The Saviour Christ is a spiritual being sent down from the realm of light above to the earth below in order to reveal divine truth to men and to illuminate their minds. As a divine being He was neither born nor did He die; He was only in outward appearance a man such as we are, in that He clothed Himself with a human body. His work consisted essentially in imparting the higher knowledge and the sacraments.

5. A definite Soteriology. Redemption is effected by the liberation of man from the bondage of the lower gods, and by the due preparation for his return to his true home above. This liberation is brought about by the imparting of the superior wisdom, the removal of man's ignorance regarding his origin, his destiny, the hindrances in the road and the way to overcome them. Thereby the divine element in man, the Spirit, becomes self-conscious. Then the Christian has to prepare himself for his homeward journey, first by the

reception of the sacraments and the seals, which will procure him a safe passage through all the hosts of hostile spirits, and next of ascetic practices, by the mortification of the flesh, of all that is the work of the demiurge. Occasionally an unbridled license took the place of this asceticism, both alike springing from the same root—dualism. Such is the course of man's redemption, at once intellectual, magical and physical.

6. A definite view of the Church. That which the Christians usually call Church is not the Church of God at all. That Church consists of the number of the spiritual, *i.e.*, of those who bring with them from the upper world the seed, the spiritual embryo. For them alone Christ appeared. They alone return after death into the kingdom of light. The aim of the Gnostic propaganda and of their conventicles is to gather them together and to awaken the slumbering divine life within them by imparting the higher mysteries to them. The natural inequality of man is presupposed. Whilst the Catholic Church in vain strives to remove this inequality by sending forth her missionaries, the Gnostic conventicles suffer Church and world to go to ruin, and reserve heaven for themselves.

Such, in the barest outline, is the Gnostic theology. What is its source? According to the theory of the later anti-gnostic Fathers of the Church, Gnosticism arose by a wholesale rejection of Catholic theology. The Catholic Church, it is said, has always remained the same; it has never changed; it is only the heretics that have changed. There is a good deal that is true in this theory. On the whole, Catholi-

cism is in the straight line of development from primitive Christianity. But the hypothesis that the Gnostics fell away from this unchangeable and fully developed Catholicism is altogether mistaken. Both Gnosticism and Catholicism can be traced to a common source — the theology and piety of the apostolic ages, which was neither Gnostic nor Catholic. Catholicism itself is in fact to a great extent only to be accounted for by the opposition to the Gnostic movement. There was a time when the two brothers, who were such deadly enemies later on, still lived at peace side by side, when the later Catholics themselves harboured a number of Gnostic ideas. For from the very first there was in the Church no lack of modes of thought and of feeling which later on spontaneously crystallized into Gnosticism.

Where, now, do we find in primitive Christianity the starting-point, the source of the Gnostic movement?

One thing is clear to begin with. The Jesus of history and the Jesus of Gnosticism have nothing whatever to do with each other. Although Jesus was placed in the centre of the Gnostic systems, He and His worshippers have no connection with each other. Speculation and mysticism are alike foreign to Jesus. His teaching never leaves the domain of the practical and the ethical, the problems of human life. He knows that He is surrounded by a world of spirits, but His curiosity is never directed towards that world. There is one occasional saying, related by St Luke, about the fall of Satan from heaven, and that only served to comfort the disciples.

Even St Paul's Christology very seldom came into contact with the historical Jesus. What St

Paul said about Jesus was really a myth—a drama to which Jesus gave His name. But then by the side of this St Paul declared the whole practical gospel of Jesus; he is a true disciple of the Lord in all his aims and ideals. Hence the great difference between him and the Gnostics. One point alone both alike confirm, viz., that the deepest speculations about Jesus offer us no kind of guarantee for true Christianity.

Nevertheless points of contact with Gnosticism have been discovered by modern writers even in Jesus. The fact is instructive, for it shows us how deeply rooted Gnostic tendencies were even in the Church itself.

1. Jesus had spoken in parables to the people. Why had He done so? For all Hellenistic Jews 'parables' were dark and mysterious sayings. The chief idea suggested by the word was something that needed explanation, problems that awaited solution. Hence the parables of Jesus were necessarily regarded as riddles and mysteries. That is the case throughout the New Testament. According to the Synoptists the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are contained in the parables. The people are not meant to understand them, but even the disciples cannot; they are too difficult. It is only with the 'solution' of Jesus that the deeper knowledge of the parables begins. The evangelist Matthew appeals for the Greek word 'parables' to Ps. lxxviii. 2, where the parallel passage reads "things hidden from the commencement of the world." St John goes still further. It is only in parables and riddles that he makes Jesus speak to the disciples as well as to the

people. The reason he gives for this is that as long as Jesus lived the understanding of the disciples did not attain to the level of the Master, and Jesus Himself therefore could not declare all as yet. These theories are not meant in a Gnostic sense. Neither St Mark nor St John mean that the parables of Jesus contain mysteries for the majority of Christians which perhaps only a chosen few understand. They only wished to emphasize the difference with which the disciples regarded and understood Jesus after the resurrection. It must be admitted, however, that we have here a point of departure for later Gnostic theories if once it were established that Jesus' words often or nearly always signified something else in addition to the apparent meaning. In fact, during the whole of the second century, the Church and the heretics completely agree as to the rationale of Jesus' use of parables. The difference between Catholics and Gnostics is entirely relative in this matter. The Gnostics take an earlier and a keener interest in the parables of Jesus, whilst the Catholics, *e.g.*, Barnabas and Justin Martyr, show a preference for the Old Testament parables. Hence Irenæus, to take one instance out of many, is really defenceless against the Gnostics; his only safety lies in appealing to the creed and in diverting attention from the mysterious to the simple and plain sayings of Jesus.

2. A second point of contact was the difference observable in the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. In St Mark's Gospel, St Peter and the two sons of Zébedee appear in several places as the recipients of especial marks of love and of confidence. They alone, *e.g.*, were eyewitnesses of His mysterious

transfiguration, of which they were not to speak till after His resurrection. It was to them and to Andrew alone that Jesus revealed the future. They were Jesus' favoured disciples. What more easy to suppose than that Jesus had revealed to them many mysteries of which the rest of the disciples were ignorant? The transfiguration itself was a proof that He had done so. Here St Mark himself paved the way for Gnosticism by working upon this esoteric theory. He tells a story unknown to the majority of the apostles in Jesus' lifetime. The need for such secret traditions, based upon the authority of those most intimate with Jesus, must have been felt in an increasing degree in the sub-apostolic age. St John endeavoured to meet this need by the introduction of the great unknown—the disciple whom Jesus loved. The case is a somewhat peculiar one. He receives no special revelation, but merely supports the Fourth Gospel by his authority. Every special revelation is indeed denied by the theory of the Spirit. We see, therefore, that while the evangelist accepts the tendencies of his age he entirely recasts them at the same time. We may therefore conclude that it was the custom amongst many Christians thus to appeal to the highest available authority for secret traditions. Papias indirectly confirms this statement when he speaks of himself as going about from one aged Christian to another and inquiring what Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew said. For the Church, however, the apostolic body as a whole took the place of all single favourites. After all, the difference is merely relative.

3. In the next place a completely isolated and harmless saying of Jesus, the promise of the Spirit after His death, which St Mark is the first to record, came to acquire great importance. What Jesus meant was that His disciples who knew not how to speak should be empowered by a higher power to defend themselves in the law courts. Hence the opinion arose that the disciples should receive in the Spirit a substitute for Jesus and a continuance of His work. This opinion was capable of very different interpretations according to the conception formed of the Spirit. The Spirit was regarded either as the source of prophecy and the talking with tongues, or as the fount of knowledge and of the superior wisdom. If emphasis was laid on the latter, then the inference was that it was only after Jesus' death that His disciples had received the higher knowledge. Hence nothing was easier now than simply to derive from the Spirit any Christian doctrine for the origin of which no room could be found in the course of the life of Jesus—unless, indeed, another favourite course was followed, that of putting the doctrine into the mouth of the risen Lord. In the Fourth Gospel the Paraclete—so His Spirit is here called as the advocate of the disciples—is the giver of all higher knowledge. In the time of the earthly Jesus we do not meet with him. His existence only dates from a later time. From him, however, may be derived everything that rendered the deep and universal comprehension of Jesus possible. It is true that as "spirit of truth" he receives an orthodox colouring, and this, too, is orthodox that the Spirit is to teach nothing new. He is simply to remind the

disciples of Jesus' teaching, but there is no formal difference between the higher wisdom of St John and that of all Gnostic revelations. Both supplement the history and the gospel of Jesus on the authority of the Spirit.

4. Lastly, there was the unusually bold assertion that Jesus made in the feeling of His superiority over the Scribes, the official interpreters of God, "No one hath known the Father save the Son." Jesus appeared here to put forth His revelation as something absolutely new and not to be compared with anything that had gone before. It seemed as though the whole of the Old Testament had been laid aside. In the Gospel of St John Jesus declares to the Jews that their God is not His Father but the devil. The Jewish monotheistic faith must have been held in very low esteem by this author, for he says that only he that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father. It is true that sentences such as these, which originated in the controversy with the Jews, were very far indeed from being intended to bear the Gnostic meaning which they appeared to possess. John fully accepts the Old Testament as a divine revelation, and therefore the connection with Old Testament history. Only his theory is that it is not God the Father but the Son of God, the Logos Christ, who appeared to patriarchs and prophets, and that they were therefore Christians, after all, before Christ. Following on these lines Justin explains the saying of Jesus to mean that the Jews did not recognize either the Father or the Son, because they did not know that He who spoke with Moses was the Son of God and not the Father. This again is

far from being Gnostic. But how easy it was, nevertheless, to base the watchword, "the new God and the new revelation," upon this saying of Jesus. What more natural than to say, "The God of the Jews was known before Jesus, therefore He was not the God whom Jesus alone revealed." The God of the Old Testament is not the Father of Jesus Christ.

But with the exception of these four points the teaching of Jesus presents no points of contact with Gnosticism whatever. Nor have we here the real starting-point of the Gnostic movement. Our former statement holds good: Jesus and the Gnostics have nothing to do with each other. But when once the current towards Gnosticism had set in, it was possible to find a place for Jesus subsequently in the Gnostic theology as we have shown above. The process began as soon as the Synoptic Gospels had been accepted by the Gentile Churches. Since the common stock of the Synoptists apprehended no danger from Gnostic sources, while the Johannine writings are full of such indications, the decisive turn must have taken place in the two last decades of the first century between the composition of St Mark's Gospel and that of St John.

The extent to which St Paul paved the way for Gnosticism was altogether different. In his soteriology, his anti-Jewish apologetics, his gnosis, there are numberless points from which the Gnostic movement may have started.

1. The source of the Pauline soteriology is the hypothesis of the entire corruption of the world. The solution that matter itself is the abode of evil

is a natural inference from the Pauline theory of the flesh. His theory of the Fall rent God and the present world asunder, and gave the latter a certain independence of its own. His theory of the Spirits enthroned Satan as the god of this world, at any rate spoke of him in a dualistic fashion. St John and Ignatius followed in the same direction; for them, too, the devil is the Prince of this world. And for St John, as for St Paul, the cosmos is something independent, something decadent, that needs salvation and yet is capable of it only to a certain degree: Jesus prays not for this world. Flesh and Spirit are opposed to each other as two hostile worlds. The Incarnation of the Logos did, it is true, make all dualistic inferences in reality impossible, yet these inferences could be drawn, and they were drawn. A further direct result was the distinction of the Creator of the world from the God of Jesus. This in itself crowns the pessimism of this system. Practically, too, Paul prepared for this result by the position which he took up with regard to the question of sex.

St Paul's Christology contains in the germ all the principal features of the Gnostic development. Jesus is called the Redeemer (Soter). He is a being whose origin is not to be sought in the lower world at all, but in heaven. His nature is heavenly. In heaven He existed before all time, until He suffered Himself to be humbled, and emptied Himself of the Pleroma. Now He became man. Yet His humanity was something foreign and strange, alien to His true nature. Hence the 'fashion' or 'similitude' of the body of sin, of the man, in which He appeared. How easy, how natural it was to draw the Docetic

conclusion! It would have been strange indeed if it had not been drawn. After a short time He ascended again to heaven after He had conquered the demons. His work as Saviour consisted in the revelation of the God of Love and the manifestation of the other world.

St John applies these Pauline theories to the Gospel narrative. Here, too, Jesus is the Soter whose dwelling-place is heaven, who came down from thence and has returned thither. He alone is from above. We all are from below. Yet in St John's writings the humiliation of Christ is not carried out completely. Even upon earth the Soter manifested all the power of His heavenly glory, and thereby revealed the hidden God. His work is to save men from the cosmos, to reveal the unknown God to them, and to grant them everlasting life. All this presupposes the consistent Pauline pessimism. But how nearly related is the Johannine Christ to Docetism. He needs neither to eat nor to drink. It is His to die or not as He likes. He looks into every human heart. He performs many divine miracles. He is miraculously delivered. Here we have inferences strictly drawn, not from the idea of the Logos, but from the heavenly divine origin of Jesus as a whole. It is evident that for the Christology of St John the Parousia and, generally speaking, the eschatological element, are almost entirely absent. At most there will be one thing left for the Redeemer to do, that He should fetch us home to the world on high. In reality, as a member of the Christian Church, John held very different opinions. In the Gospel he is writing as a learned man.

The Pauline soteriology, in the narrower sense of the word, is already marked by very strong Gnostic tendencies. The Spirit is the agent upon whom everything depends. St Paul makes the Spirit to be the gift of God or of Christ, which only those receive who believe in the Soter.

Salvation consists in the reception and in the growth of the Spirit. But the Spirit is restricted to certain media, as, *e.g.*, the Church and the Sacraments above all others. By means of the Church and the Sacraments the Christian receives a new accession of strength from above, and he himself helps to prepare a fit dwelling-place for the Spirit by a mortification of the passions which is often almost ascetic. Even now the Christian is a new creature, risen from the dead, a member of the body of Christ. It is only St Paul's eschatological teaching, however, that completes the process: thereby the flesh is entirely subdued and the spirit returns to its home, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

St Paul's successor, St John, holds essentially the same theory as to redemption. The beginning of the new life is the new birth, the birth from above—the passing from death unto life, and the end is the return to the world above. Only St John does not ascribe nearly as much to the agency of the Spirit, while all that man can and ought to do himself is thoroughly emphasized. Here we have already the reaction from the exaggerated theory of the Spirit put forward by the Gnostics. Nevertheless the new life is described, as it was later by Valentinus, as the victory over the world and liberation from its snares.

The Christian looks forward with longing to the completion of this victory. Baptism is the means whereby we receive the birth from above; the Lord's Supper brings us heavenly food and strengthens the new life. Expressions which strongly remind us of the Gnostic writings are to be met with on almost every page: God dwells in Christians and they are in God. God and Christ together come and take up their abode in the soul of a truly pious man. Just as the Gnostics said, "We neither sin now, nor have we sinned," so St John declares, "He that is born of God, cannot sin; for God's seed, the Spirit, dwells in him." The devil dare not touch him at all. We are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness. However great the vehemence with which St John engages in the struggle against the Gnostics, it must be admitted that the expressions which he employs are often practically indistinguishable from those of his adversaries.

The final development of the Pauline pessimism is the doctrine of the creator of the world who is not identical with the highest God. So, again, the Pauline Christology ends in Docetism, and his teaching that we are saved by the Spirit is a soteriology which is at once physical and magical, while the evolution of his eschatology consists in the denial of the resurrection of the body. These are, of course, developments which St Paul himself would have utterly repudiated, and it is the easiest thing in the world to refute them by means of his epistles. All that is best, all the Christian elements in the Pauline theology, are opposed to Gnosticism. But for all that, the Pauline soteriology contained a powerful

Gnostic leaven. The delight in speculation, mysticism, asceticism, even magic, found abundant material therein. The development which the Pauline theology experienced at the hands of St John is a proof how strongly Gnostic tendencies, based upon St Paul's writings, had influenced the very Christians who were engaged in the struggle against Gnosticism. The difference between the Gnostics and St John is often merely this: that St John had not the courage to draw the logical conclusion from his own statements.

2. St Paul's anti-Jewish apologetics would also be likely to strike many as incomplete and standing in need of further consistent development. Paul had rejected the Jewish law, and had at the same time declared it to be divinely inspired. Such a position could not be maintained permanently. Did not St Paul himself emphasize the fact—when it suited him—that the law had been given by angels, and was closely related to the elements of the world? In other words, the law is not to be ascribed to the good God. Barnabas—a teacher of the Church—went so far as to refer the literal keeping of the law to a temptation of the devil. At the same time he denied that God had concluded a covenant with the Jews. In St John's Gospel Jesus always speaks of 'your,' *i.e.*, of the Jews' law. All this produced the theory which separated the God of the law and the Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus' own positive position towards the law pointed, it is true, in another direction. Many indications, however, furnished by the Synoptists caused distinctions to be made in the law itself. At any rate in its literal

sense the ceremonial law could not be derived from the highest God.

A practical antinomianism was the result. Everything depends upon Faith and Love and the Spirit. All else is secondary. There is no law for the Christian, and nothing is forbidden. Christians are quite free; all is permitted them. Text after text taken from St Paul's writings, but without the context, of course, seems to countenance libertinism. And this libertinism could be understood either in a refined or in a coarse sense.

In the course of his controversy with the Jews, St Paul had set up the doctrine of a twofold Predestination, setting up a direct contradiction for thought therein. It was asserted that one and the same God had created vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy. This was incredible. A twofold predestination presupposes a twofold God—the saved imply a God of mercy, the lost a God of wrath.

Now in St Paul's writings there were frequent references to those that were of the flesh and those that were of the Spirit. The latter class had received their spiritual endowment from the God of the Christians; but who had assigned to the former their evil lot? St Paul gave no answer to that question. What more natural than to suppose a different origin, a different God for the fleshly man? The new thought of predestination is immediately connected with the idea of the two classes of men.

This connection is best seen in St John's writings. His thoughts are those of a strict predestinarian, but at the same time they have a dualistic colouring.

There are children of God and children of the devil. The origin of both is transcendental, from everlasting. The Spirit is the seed, the germ which the child of God brings from the world above. Henceforth there can be no moral freedom. Nevertheless St John champions the cause of freedom and rejects dualism. He claims to be on the side of the apologists and not of the Gnostics. He is unshaken in his belief that there is a transition from death unto life, from the flesh to the Spirit, by means of the miracle of conversion. Thereby he eliminates the aristocratic and deterministic flavour from the theory of the two classes of mankind. He does not think as a Gnostic, even though he sometimes speaks as one.

3. It was through his Gnosis, however, that St Paul exercised the strongest influence of all on the new tendency which is named after it. We have to take into account here not only the form of this Gnosis, its definition, and the determination of its relation to faith, but also the contents, the angelological and Christological speculations that were the results of the inspired exegesis.

The Pauline Gnosis has been defined as the revealed understanding of revelation. Three characteristic features are to be noted: it counts higher than faith; it is the property of single individuals; its source is in the Spirit. Exactly the same conception of the essential nature of Gnosis is to be found in the ecclesiastical teachers of the sub-apostolic age, *e.g.*, in the writers of the Epistles to the Hebrews and of Clement and Barnabas. It may be objected, indeed, that they emphasize the fact that all Christians

ought to possess Gnosis, since all have been endowed with the Spirit. But an examination of these writings proves conclusively that the authors felt themselves in an especial degree to be the representatives of the higher knowledge as compared with their readers who were being educated up to it. The classical passage for the ecclesiastical conception of Gnosis is contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"Of Melchizedek we have many things to say and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing. For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the beginning of the word of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk hath no understanding in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for the perfect, even those who by practice have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. Therefore we will leave the word of the beginning of Christ and press on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the teaching of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment." No mention is here made of the Spirit. The author, who has been trained by Philo, follows a scientific method of exegesis, which almost assumes the place of inspiration for him. The proud exaltation, however, of Gnosis above faith, and of the teacher of perfection above the ignorant multitude, can be traced very plainly. There is no difference between ecclesiastical and Gnostic teachers as regards the

essential nature of Gnosis and of the position which it should occupy.

Another point is to be noticed. The ecclesiastical teachers exercised their skill in distinguishing the double meaning of Scripture on the Old Testament. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does this by contrasting, as Plato would have done, between the idea and its copy in the world of phenomena. For him the whole of the Old Testament order of things has merely the value of such a copy or shadow. The application of this method to the words of Jesus and to the writings of St Paul cannot as yet be traced in ecclesiastical teachers. And yet it existed as a matter of fact when Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is made to speak almost exclusively in parables. The Gnostic teachers therefore introduced no new principle in applying the Platonic methods of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the objects of the Christian faith. In fact, it was only by this means that a certain obscurity in the relation of Gnosis to faith was removed. It is not the same object which is presented to faith as folly and to Gnosis as wisdom. Faith merely sees the copy, the appearance. It is only Gnosis that grasps the original in the world of spirit. That is the later Valentinian method, and the Church was powerless against it, for it had already surrendered on the question of principle. The first germs of the method may possibly be discovered even in St John's writings. Are not baptism and the Lord's Supper there considered to be the types of higher truths, the birth from above and the feeding with the Logos? The miracles are not merely signs of

the Messiah's power, but also allegories of spiritual ideas: *e.g.*, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. The death of Jesus appears to signify the judgment upon Jesus; in truth, it is the judgment upon the devil. The great allegories that we find in Valentinus of the life of Jesus and of the cross of Paul are chiefly developed from these germs. The only difference is that John attaches a certain importance to the verbal signification of the narrative, whereas the later Gnostics reject it altogether.

But the contents of the Pauline Gnosis exercised an important influence on the development of the heresy. The Gnosis was to be the revealed exegesis of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, it revealed a number of things which had but a very slight connection with the Old Testament. It read out of the Scriptures a great supernatural story of Christ and of the spirits, discovered the mysteries of the fall, of the struggle between the good and evil spirits and their reconciliation, set up Jesus and His cross as the centre, the sun of the world of spirits, formed the conceptions of the fulness (Pleroma) and the emptying (Kenosis) of the Godhead in Christ. The union, too, of Christ and the Church, the pattern of marriage, St Paul discovered in the Old Testament. It can be proved that these angelological and Christological speculations seriously engaged the attention and deeply stirred the imagination of the Church. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Hermas, employ methods which are almost diametrically opposed, but their end is the same—the definition of Christ's position towards angels and arch-

angels. Both assign to Him the central position in the realm of spirits. Turning to St John, we find a passage of especial importance in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus. "If I told you earthly things and ye believe me not, how will ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" The Christian, therefore, has a revealed knowledge—given him either by Christ or the Spirit—of the heavenly world, as a part of which we must certainly reckon the conviction that Satan is the father of the unbelieving Jews and that he has fallen from heaven. A passage in the letter of Ignatius to the Trallians looks exactly like an exposition of these words of St John. The heavenly things are the goal of Christian knowledge. Amongst these we must reckon the rank and order of the angels and the hosts of the Archons, both the visible and invisible, and all in relation to Christ and the Cross. For it is only faith in the blood of Jesus that makes even angels and spirits blessed. The whole of this superior wisdom, however, seems to be too exalted even for an Ignatius, not to speak of the simple-minded in the congregation, upon whom it could not fail to exercise a baneful influence. Here we have a test for the contents of the ecclesiastical Gnosis. It is essentially akin to that of the heretics.

St Paul cannot, in fact, be acquitted of the charge of having very greatly furthered the Gnostic movement. Things crept into Christianity through his instrumentality which are nowhere to be found in Jesus' teaching: there were speculations of the wildest nature, which lightly passed over every obstacle in the spirit-world; mysticism was introduced in the doctrine of the indwelling Christ or

Spirit; while celibacy was exalted, the libertine could find phrases which afforded him a handle to justify his excesses, and wisdom was held in high esteem, from a wish to find some compromise with the Greeks. More important than all these details is the general tendency of his system, his dualism which sets church and world, Adam and Christ, flesh and spirit, mind and spirit, will and grace, in absolute opposition to each other, the only link between them being the God who governs the whole drama of the world. At bottom, however, St Paul's nature was entirely alien to Gnosticism. He was a churchman in the widest and best sense of the word. Unlike the majority of the Gnostics, he did not think that the things of the Spirit were meant to be enjoyed in selfish, aristocratic exclusiveness. They should contribute their meed of service to social progress. High above all speculations and sentiments stood righteousness, love, the spirit of service, and self-control. He regards even the wildest theories as means to further quiet work in the social life of the community. As soon as ever there was a chance of helping the brethren, he forgot his own soul, together with all selfish religious enjoyment. Freedom of the conscience and the glory of knowledge are secondary considerations where weak and anxious souls are in distress. That is the bright reverse of St Paul's ecclesiastical character. And it was just this sense that he had of the social side of Christianity which enabled him to maintain an altogether different relation to the world than that with which the Gnostics were acquainted. The world is for him the missionary's field, the soil given by God in which the Church

is to be planted. It belongs to God just as much as the Church. It is one and the same God who placed us in this world and redeemed us into the kingdom of His Son. In opposition to the Gnostic heretics at Colossae, St Paul maintains that things visible and invisible, world and church, have their centre in Christ. For this truly catholic broad-mindedness he reaped his reward. In spite of all the boasting of the Gnostics about their Paul, the Church did not waver in her allegiance to her Founder.

But from this we infer that Gnosticism certainly cannot be derived from St Paul in the straight line of descent, however much later Gnostic teachers appealed to him. They made use of the apostle, and appealed to his authority, but he was not their ultimate source. No Gnostics whatever were personal scholars of St Paul. Their relation of dependence upon him only dates from the circulation of the Pauline letters among the Churches—*i.e.*, from about the nineties of the first century. By the reading of his letters they were then confirmed in convictions which they had formed already.

Now if Gnosticism can neither be derived from Jesus, with whom it has nothing in common, nor directly from St Paul, to whom the ecclesiastical and anti-gnostic features are no less prominent than those which furthered Gnosticism, then it can only be explained by the influence of foreign elements upon Christianity. Gnosticism arose through the absorption of Christianity in its earliest days into the great syncretism of all religions. Jewish, Babylonian, Persian, Syrian, Egyptian, Greek influences stormed in upon the Christian faith in its infancy, and pro-

duced those curious Gnostic conglomerates which belong rather to the general history of religion than to that of the early days of Christianity.

Of all these influences the Jewish must at first have been the most powerful. The heretical teachers, against whom the author of the Pastoral epistles and Ignatius take up arms, are described by them as Judaizing. Hegesippus tells us that the Gnostics spring from Jewish sects. The great arch-heretic of the later fathers, Simon Magus, was a half Jew, a Samaritan, and the Gnostic sources of the pseudo-Clementines which are directed against him are likewise to be traced to a Jewish-Christian *milieu*. None of these men, in fact, were strict Jews like those Judaizers, *e.g.*, who intrigued against St Paul. The official, rabbinical Judaism excommunicated such Gnostic Jews just as much as the Christians. They were the representatives of a Jewish faith which had itself succumbed to foreign influences.

It is easily conceivable how Jews, adherents apparently of the most exclusive and firmly established of religions, suffered themselves to be drawn into this universal maëlstrom of religions. The distinctive feature of the Jewish character is something purely practical, the strict retention of the national law. The conception of dogma in the usual sense of the word did not exist here at all. Men were free to believe what they liked, and there were therefore no doctrinal disputes. The most varied phantasmagorias concerning the future life were taken up into the Apocalyptic. It admitted Greek fancies as to hell as readily as Babylonian dragon-myths or Persian ideas as to resurrection. There was

nothing to prevent any eschatology whatever from being accepted. So, too, the main portion of the belief in angels was imported from Persia and Babylonia. Actual dualistic statements seemed to pass unnoticed, and the rigid monotheistic belief was modified by theories as to intermediary beings, the word, the metatron, the Schechinah. In many of its writings the New Testament is itself a witness for the disintegration of the Jewish faith. The existence of a monastic order such as that of the Essenes proves to us that such foreign fancies were able in the end to transform everyday life as well, and to compete with the national law. Thus the way was paved for the rise of Gnosticism in the heart of Judaism. Gnosticism was at the door, as soon as the national law began to fall into desuetude through conclusions drawn from foreign speculations, as soon as the foreign element began to oust the national in practice as well as in theory. The sources of the pseudo-Clementines afford us the best insight into this decomposition of Judaism. We can here see what portions of the Old Testament could no longer be accepted by the Jews — the instances of anthropomorphism in the mention made of God, the grievous taints that disfigured the lives of the patriarchs; above all, the ceremonial law involving the shedding of blood for the sacrifices. In this last point they agree with the Essenes, in others they harmonize with the line of development of the Scribes themselves. But by the side of this opposition to the old a need was very soon felt for new objects of worship and a closer fellowship. Through sacred ablutions, unctions and meals, they separate themselves from the rest of the

community and form a little circle of the initiated. Here alone the cabala is handed down of prophets and prophetesses who alternately traverse the field of history and deliver oracles, and the cabala of the true prophet, Adam—Christ, who is incarnate under various names and shapes, and who reveals to us what is eternal and good in the Old Testament and what is temporal and not divine. But this new element, this doctrine of the sacraments and the mysteries, is no longer to be derived from Judaism itself, since it destroys the chief characteristic of the Jewish religion, the connection between God and His people.

Hence the ultimate origin of Gnosticism is to be sought beyond Judaism. It is an alien element in Judaism itself, derived partly from Babylon—hence the roll assigned to the Seven, the gods of the constellations in the oldest cosmogonies, partly from Persia—hence the good God, the Saviour of men from the might of the tyrants, the gods of the constellations. First of all, these two religions, the Babylonian and the Persian, met and produced the idea of the enslavement of the soul through the fateful power of the lower tyrants, and of its liberation and its ascent up above all the stars to the good God of light. Then these ideas firmly established themselves in Jewish hands. The God of the Jews, the creator of the world, had to submit to be degraded and Himself to become the first of the tyrants. The fact that the Jewish national God is the demiurge in all Gnostic systems, proves that Gnostic doctrines travelled to Christianity by way of Judaism. Nothing was more natural for Christians, when they heard this esoteric teaching, than to assign the roll of

the redeemer to their Lord Jesus. He thus occupied the same central position in these speculations as He had already obtained in the theology of St Paul. It was discovered that the Pauline anti-Jewish soteriology after all expressed pretty much the same truth as the new Gnostic doctrines, though the consequences were not drawn quite so strictly. People like Simon Magus, however, assigned to themselves the principal role in the Gnostic system. For Simon declared that the unknown God appeared amongst the Jews as the Son, amongst the Samaritans as the Father, and amongst the Gentiles as the Holy Ghost, placing himself thereby above Jesus as surely as the Father is higher than the Son.

Finally, these Gnostico-Babylonian-Jewish-Christian ideas made their way to the Greek Christians. It was then that they were purified and clarified by Greek philosophy. The difference is noticeable when the systems of Valentinus and his scholars are compared with the speculations of other Gnostics such as the Ophite sects. Even the highest systems betray their barbaric origin, but yet they approach, and that very nearly, to the tendency prevalent amongst the cultured classes which was making for neoplatonism. It was only through these esoteric Gnostic doctrines that Christianity was rendered accessible to many educated Greeks. Hitherto Christianity had appeared to them to be of purely indigenous Jewish growth. The Jewish anthropomorphic God, Jesus the crucified as Saviour, the grossly material Jewish Apocalyptic, were all mere idle dreams and fancies for intellectual Greeks. They now learnt of a purer higher conception of

the divinity, of the death on the cross as apparent merely, of a heavenly world without flesh and blood, painted in purely spiritual colours. The Oriental mythology of the Gnostics proved to be nearer akin to Greek philosophy than the system of ideas of early Christianity which reckoned with the hard facts of history. We know, it is true, that a very strong current had set in towards Hellenism in ecclesiastical Christianity as well. But Gnosticism hastened this process.

But to these three influences—the Jewish, the Babylonian-Persian, the Greek, each of which can clearly be recognized—we must not forget to add a vast importation of superstition and chimeras from every corner of the chaos of peoples inhabiting the then-known world. There was a truly international element in the Gnostic religion. Incantations of all kinds, the love of the mysteries, both old and new, a universal ascetic ideal of saintliness, and side by side with it bestial aberrations, every occult science, every variety of swindling, are all bound up with the esoteric doctrines of Gnosticism, which are not altogether lacking in elevation. The profoundest reflections end in merely childish or abstruse speculations. The first present which the chaos of peoples hastened to give to the new religion was every scrap of religious mystery which could be collected together.

The circumstances of the time were exceedingly favourable to the rise of Gnosticism.

We must picture this earliest age of the Church as one in which men were perfectly free to think and to teach whatever they wished. Only one dogma was necessarily imposed—Jesus is the Lord,

or Redeemer. Everything else was left to the inspiration of the individual. The Spirit was richly poured out upon prophets and prophetesses, upon teachers of all kinds. This is the reason why theological conceptions had not as yet crystallized. True, the Old Testament canon was shared with Judaism, but one had not as yet definitely ascertained what belonged to it and what did not, and the rabbinical exegesis which had formed a barrier against the Gnostics was rejected. Jesus Himself had differentiated certain portions of the law—at least such was the universal opinion—and St Paul had declared the law to be annulled. How could the Old Testament, then, possibly continue to be regarded as an authority? Certain practical maxims were, it is true, generally accepted, such, *e.g.*, as were afterwards formulated in the apostles' decree. Yet even here there were notable exceptions—Paul had not followed the apostolic injunctions in the matter of meat offered to idols. At any rate, in the sphere of dogma there was the same absolute absence of all restriction as prevailed in Judaism. Gnosticism arose at a time when the apostles, prophets and teachers were still the leading personalities in the Church, and every one of these inspired persons exercised a very widely-spread influence. It would seem that in the oldest time the propagators of Gnosticism were almost without exception men of this character. They were workers of magic, performers of miracles, prophets and prophetesses. Hence the amazing rapidity with which their esoteric teaching spread; hence, too, the authority which they exercised, and the defencelessness of many

Christians against them. For it was nothing new that they professed to be teaching. They merely claimed to possess the especial understanding of revealed truth like every other Christian teacher. As long as this freedom existed, there was nothing to prevent Christianity being deluged by foreign religions.

There is an additional factor, however, the consideration of which is essential to a right understanding of the genesis of Christian Gnosticism. Gnosticism did not merely force its way into Christianity from outside; it arose in the midst of the congregations as well. Its origin is to be looked for in connection with the influx of the Pagan masses into the Christian congregations and the reaction that was occasioned thereby, leading to the formation of more restricted circles of people of holy life as a protest against the Christianity of the masses. Even as far back as St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians we have a remarkable picture of the curious composition of an early Christian congregation and the great differences within it. These Christian Corinthians were for the most part the offscourings of the big cities, the most degraded and sunken elements of the population. Nor did this state of things change speedily. The congregations were for a long time to come mostly recruited from the lowest ranks of society. From an intellectual point of view they must be conceived of as exceedingly rude and superstitious, and morally they were far below the ideal of St Paul. The Church had flung her doors wide open for them that were without, and had made the conditions of salvation for the individual very easy at his entrance. We cannot

feel surprised, therefore, that this invitation was accepted by very large numbers. Thus from the very earliest times a Christianity of the masses, an average Christianity, was gradually developed, called by St Paul carnal and childish, which was nevertheless to be assured of everlasting life and the future kingdom of God. But now the First Epistle to the Corinthians shows us likewise that from the very first there were a number of strong, educated and enlightened Christians who were raised above the common herd. "We all have knowledge" was their favourite motto. To this group belonged also the followers of Apollos, who looked for wisdom and intellectual perfection in Christianity as though it were one of the mysteries. But these enlightened men could also be ascetics, for it seems that the freedom to eat of meat offered to idols, and the demand for entire continence in marriage, applied to the same group of people at Corinth. Little circles, therefore, of Christians who aimed at a higher ideal of sanctity and of knowledge by the side of the great bulk of the congregations, were a characteristic feature of our religion from the very first. As time went on the chasm between the two widened. The more merely average Christianity made its way into the Church, the greater the need for closer combination felt by those Christians who fancied themselves in possession of a higher or at any rate of a different kind of ideal. The fact that these enlightened Christians would in our estimation often simply be a little less superstitious than the others, does not affect the case. They thought themselves to be of a higher order, even if their only prerogative was the possession of a new charm.

We here come across a curious contradiction. These narrower circles of the initiated and illuminated were the first to succumb to the attacks of an increasing worldliness. Their secret doctrines, as well as their sacraments and their ethics, came from outside sources, from the great chaos of heathen religions. That which they set forth as a higher Christianity and a progress in knowledge is, from our point of view, the decomposition and dissolution of the Gospel into a heathen syncretism—a confused mass of superstitions and philosophies. They themselves, however, usually, if not always, regarded their work, on the contrary, as a reaction. Marcion was not the only one to proclaim the watchword, "Back to Paul; back to all that is original and genuine." Nearly all the Gnostic schools advanced the claim to a better and purer knowledge of Jesus and Paul than the Church of their day, based as it was on a spirit of legalism and tradition. This Church appeared to them to be too wide, too universal, too much a Church of the world and of sinners. Surely this could not be the Church which claimed to be the body of Christ, the fellowship of the elect, of the saints, of the spiritual. A blind, blunt, traditional faith, worldly ethics, a sensual, Jewish hope for the future world: such appeared to be her characteristics. This Church was the world, the fellowship of the unredeemed, of natural men. In contrast to this Church, the Gnostics form their narrower circles and gather the saints into their conventicles, where they impart to them the higher initiation, and reveal to them the higher knowledge by which alone the Christian truly becomes such. Gnosticism thus regarded—and such it was in its own

estimation—denotes the first great reaction in the Church, the first Puritan movement directed against the worldly Church.

It is only after taking considerations such as these into account that the relation of Gnostic theology to Paulinism becomes clear. There can be no doubt that St Paul did not originate the Gnostic movement; no single one of his own pupils could become a Gnostic. For St Paul the Catholic Church is the firm ground upon which he stands, the basis of his thoughts and work, the fervent love of his heart, the centre of all his speculations. The whole of his theology is an ecclesiastical dualism which divides the world into two halves—without Christ, with Christ; allotting death to the former, life to the latter, and yet keeping both together through God, the creator and ruler. It was when this standard of the Catholic Church was abandoned in favour of that of a mere sect that the Puritan-Gnostic theology was developed from St Paul's. And this was the critical moment in the evolution of Gnosticism; not the influx of foreign thoughts and rites, but the transference of the centre of gravity from the Church catholic into the little circle of the spiritual. Thereby the ecclesiastical dualism is transformed into an absolute, metaphysical dualism. God and the world fall altogether asunder, just as the spirit and the flesh, the spirit and reason. The spiritual alone are chosen by God to all eternity; all the rest of mankind, even including other Christians, are the children of the devil or of some inferior deity. Christ is not the redeemer of the world, but of the spiritual, who leads them back to the home from which they have

come, the kingdom of light. This Gnosticism would, of course, have arisen even without St Paul; there were very many Gnostic sects which knew nothing whatever about him. But it never would have become such a spiritual power in the Church had it not conquered and adapted to its own purposes the dualistic soteriology of St Paul. Again and again in the later history of the Church a puritan or pietistic theology has arisen according to this same law, by an accentuation of the Pauline dualism and a contraction of the Church into a sect.

CATHOLICISM AND GNOSTICISM.

THE STRUGGLE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

CHAPTER X.

The Intellectual Struggle.

The first encounter between the Church and the Gnostic tendencies occurred while St Paul was still alive. Heretical teachers appeared at Colossae, who had already been engulfed in the great whirlpool of religions. They boasted of their Jewish circumcision and of their Greek philosophy, recommended angelolatry and ascetic practices. Paul combated them from the standpoint of his gnosis, and opposed practical Christian principles to their asceticism. We know nothing as to the further history of this Colossian sect. It was the advance guard of the invading army which attacked the Church on all sides in the last two decades of the first century, and is noticed in almost every contemporary ecclesiastical writing. The Pastoral and Johannine epistles (about 100 A.D.) are the earliest documents to give us a clear conception of their opponent's position.

It is very instructive how quickly, after all, the consciousness of the difference between what was

Christian and what was Gnostic was acquired. We see how the Pauline theology impelled even ecclesiastical teachers such as John, *e.g.*, to travel very far in the direction of Gnosticism. Speculation was very highly esteemed. God and the world, the spirit and the flesh, were discussed in a dualistic fashion. In certain additions made to the Gospels a very near approach indeed was made to Docetism. But these very same representatives of the ecclesiastical Gnosis instinctively rejected anything that was Gnostic theology properly so-called. There is only one explanation of this. Their feeling for that which was and that which was not Christian, was on the whole too strong to be endangered by any speculations of a Gnostic tendency. This was fortunate for the Church, and honourable for these men. Their theology was a very incomplete reproduction of Christianity. The real Jesus fitted neither to the Jewish nor to the Greek formulæ which they employed. But they had that personal Christianity which is patient of every kind of speculation — up to the point when it is itself threatened. When once this point is reached it is stirred into activity, and silences the theologian in the midst of his speculations. So it was now. The Church theologians themselves entered the lists against the Gnostics, and opposed their antithesis to every thesis brought forward by the latter. We can now clearly recognize which side preserves the true line of Christian succession in every point.

1. The debate as to the first capital point, the principle of authority, was the most unfortunate The Gnostics proclaimed the supremacy of the Spirit

This implied the right of license and the victory of the non-Christian element over the Gospel. Had Christianity developed along the lines indicated by this theory, it would have disappeared altogether in the chaos of peoples. The Church's teachers, however, declared that the Spirit of Christ alone—*i.e.*, the Christian tradition—was decisive. Nothing could be more sensible. Unfortunately ecclesiastical law was exclusively substituted for the Spirit in the process of the determination and limitation of the tradition. We shall have occasion to recur to this point when we discuss the forcible measures employed by the Church. But this is the place to mention another matter. The divinity of the Old Testament, even of the law, is maintained against the criticism of the Gnostics. It was the Old Testament to which the Gnostic spirit could least of all adapt itself. It was held in very low esteem, made out to be the work of a lower order of spirits, of the demiurge or even of Satan himself; and to establish their position they made use of apocryphal writings both old and new. It was felt, however, by the Church that the destruction of the Old Testament cut the ground from under the feet of the Christians and exposed them to every storm. There were additional weighty motives of a practical character. The proof from prophecy was needed for apologetic purposes, and for this the Old Testament writings were indispensable. And the defence of Christianity as of the old and lawful religion, was invalidated by the abandonment of the Old Testament. It was a difficult matter to defend the Old Testament as a Christian book at once against the Gnostics and the Jews. But this

position was maintained. The author of the Pastoral epistles warns the bishops not to suffer the Old Testament to escape them through the perversions of the Gnostics. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for doctrine, for instruction, for reproof, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness." He presupposes the Jewish doctrine of the inspiration of the Old Testament, and merely fights for the ecclesiastical utility of the book. But what is to be counted as belonging to the Old Testament? No very clear decision was reached as to this point. On the one hand, we find a disposition to submit to the judgment of the Jewish Rabbis at Jabne, whose canon of the Hebrew Old Testament exactly corresponds with our own. Hence certain Christian teachers began to reject the Apocrypha at a very early date. The author of the Second Epistle of St Peter, who copies the whole of the letter of St Jude, carefully omits or obliterates the quotations from the book of Enoch and the Ascension of Moses. Jerome's later statement, that many Christians rejected the letter of St Jude because of its quotations from the book of Enoch, agrees with this. People, however, like the author of the Second Epistle of St Peter were the exceptions in this first age. The great majority of the Christians possessed the Septuagint, and the canon set up by the Rabbis of Jabne did not apply here. Apocryphal Jewish writings must have been very extensively employed in the Church up to the time of Origen. There was the same absence of decision with regard to exegesis. In spite of Gnostic abuses of the practice, the right of allegorical interpretation was maintained. There was no

saving the Old Testament without allegory. The best illustration of the lengths to which some went in this direction are to be found in the Epistle of St Barnabas, where he applies the red heifer to Christ, and the Gematry of Elieser, Abraham's three hundred and eighteen servants, to Jesus the crucified. The chief point was, however, gained: the Old Testament remained intact as a divine book and as the canon for the Church. In spite of all disastrous consequences, that was a fortunate event for the future history of mankind.

2. The Gnostics separated the creator of the world from the redeemer. The Church maintained their unity. The creator is no inferior God, but the true and highest God, the redeemer. The author of the Pastoral epistles combats the Gnostic theory of the divinity by insisting on the unity of God and opposing asceticism. "Every creature of God is good. God has created meat and drink for the Christians, to be received by them with thanksgiving." It was clearly recognized in the Church that it was no mere matter of speculation. Had the Christian any right to believe in Providence? That was the issue at stake. Is God or the devil supreme in this world? Is the believer indebted for his life, his health, his natural powers, to the God that redeems him, or to an enemy of God? About the middle of the second century the old expressions "the devil, the prince of this world," etc., almost vanish from Christian writings. By a bold exegesis Irenæus makes out that Paul never called Satan God of this world. And on the other hand, God appears in the creeds as creator of heaven and earth. At

all costs the negative attitude to the world is to be avoided.

3. The defence of "the resurrection of the flesh" against the purely spiritualistic eschatology of the Gnostics was a natural consequence of the belief in God the creator. The heresy that the Resurrection had already taken place is first met with in the Pastoral epistles, and both Polycarp and Justin make further mention of it. We may reasonably assume that the practical significance of this dogma—which was of Jewish origin—had been already realized, as it certainly was later by Irenæus and Tertullian. The body belongs to the whole man such as he was created by God. Whoever denies the resurrection of the flesh thereby attacks the God of creation. An additional reason was the unwillingness to give up the Jewish eschatology. But the really decisive argument was the first. Much difficulty indeed was occasioned by St Paul's statement, that flesh and blood should not inherit the kingdom of God. Irenæus tells us that it was the main support of the Gnostics; and even before this, Justin attempted to adapt the phrase to the creed of the Church in a book which has been lost. But the stories of the risen Lord appeared more important than words of St Paul. Here the theory of the resurrection of the flesh was actually realized. There is something truly magnificent in the way in which the martyrs go forth to death with the certainty that the God who created their body can likewise restore it.

4. From eschatology we turn to Christology. Here the most valuable tenet, the humanity of Jesus, was protected against the Gnostics and their

Docetic dissolvent. This Docetism appeared at a very early date as a natural consequence of the 'divinity' of Christ; nor was it confined in all probability to the Gnostic schools. It was opposed first of all by the author of the Pastoral epistles, who maintains the true humanity of Jesus, "One mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus." The author of the Johannine epistles has to do with opponents who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and who dissolve, as Cerinthus did, the nature of Jesus, *i.e.*, distinguish between the heavenly Christ and the earthly Jesus. They also deny the blood, *i.e.*, the death of Jesus. In opposition to these views John dwells upon the human body of Christ, upon His real death, and upon the unity in the nature of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. A little later we find the characteristic expressions of Docetism in use among the heretics, the adversaries of Ignatius: it was, the body in which Christ suffered was only a phantom. Everything human that is told us of Jesus, His Davidic Sonship, His birth, His eating and drinking, His death and resurrection, all His actions, were only in appearance. In opposition to this Ignatius takes his stand upon the statements of the creed, and to each he adds his 'verily.' Here again it is a practical interest for which the Church is struggling; is the personal assurance of salvation to rest upon a phantom or a reality? "Why," asks Ignatius, significantly, "why should I suffer myself to be cast to the lions for a faith which rests upon an illusion?" And here at least the Church had a very powerful ally in St Paul. His whole system fell to pieces, if its core and centre, the cross, was

only a phantom. The reconciliation of the divinity of Christ with His humanity, that was so stoutly defended, causes no anxiety for the present. It is none other than Ignatius who speaks of Jesus by preference as God. The fact itself was all that was of importance. The way in which it was brought about was a question left for future generations to solve. We may at any rate thankfully acknowledge our debt of gratitude to these men. Had it not been for them, the historic Christ would have been entirely explained away.

5. The physical soteriology of the Gnostics now has to make way for the moral and ecclesiastical doctrine of salvation. The Gnostics appealed to St Paul's doctrine of the Spirit. However one-sided and arbitrary the fashion in which they interpreted this, they were right in the main thought: the Christian is redeemed by the power of God coming over him. How important the Spirit was to them we may infer indirectly from the fact that salvation by the Spirit is completely thrust into the background both in the Pastoral letters and in that of St John. Through the latter we get to know a number of expressions current among the Gnostics: "I have known God; I am in the light; I dwell in God; I am born in God and God's seed dwells in me; I have passed from death unto life; I love God; the love of God is completed in me; we do not sin, neither have we sinned." Knowledge always occupies the first place; the second is assigned to mysticism as the fruit of knowledge, to the flight of the soul above all the world to God, and the indwelling of God in the soul. This ideal of piety was in nowise necessarily

followed by licentious excess. Even in the case of noble and elevated souls it was, however, usually attended by the neglect and depreciation of simple morality, of love, and social duties. Ignatius excellently characterizes these religious epicures: "They care nothing for love, nothing for widows, nothing for orphans, nothing for the sick, nothing for prisoners or freed captives, nothing for them that hunger and thirst. They neglect the holy eucharist and the prayers of the Church." The temptation to indulge in this mystic and contemplative piety, appealing as it did so confidently to the words of the Apostle Paul, was very great, and that the Church resisted it with a like confidence, is a proof of its sober sanity. The authors of the Pastoral epistles and of the Johannine writings stand shoulder to shoulder in their zeal for the practical and ethical interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus, in their rejection of all speculations of mysticism and asceticism. Faith and love, says the pseudo-Paul, are the greatest things. Here we have the sound doctrine. All depends upon righteousness, faith, love and unity with one's brother Christians in the Church. Christians are to do good works, that is, praiseworthy and profitable to men. No Christian is to spend a fruitless life. Better a piety that is useful in many ways than an asceticism which profits but little. The First Epistle of St John contains the same thoughts, only they are expressed in the author's far more impressive and characteristic phraseology—How is a Christian to be recognized? If he keeps the commandments, if he does righteousness, if he loves the brethren. This is all that really matters.

Knowledge and mysticism are empty phrases as soon as simple morality and love are wanting. But where love is, there is also knowledge and communion with God. As God cannot be the direct object of our love, we ought to show the love of God to the brethren. In both groups of letters the doctrine of salvation by the Spirit is thrust into the background; in the Pastoral epistles it is actually given up altogether, because it seriously threatened morality. The Church and the Sacraments take the place of the Spirit; in them the saving grace of God draws near to men. But, then, the Christian is himself to work and to labour, that the new life may be formed in him. A natural consequence of the emphasis thus laid upon morality was the defence of the freedom of the will which first Justin and then Irenæus undertook. Henceforth nature and man's will were the watchwords. This antithesis corresponded to actually existing contrasts. The very existence of Christianity as the highest ethical religion was at stake.

6. The last antithesis was the truest. Sect or Catholic Church — the gathering together of the spiritual, or the call to go forth and make disciples of all men. The Gnostics had withdrawn arrogantly from the Church. They had refused to take part in the life of the fellowship. We may infer from St John's First Epistle that they hated the brethren, *i.e.*, the ordinary Christians; that they criticised and despised them, and gave themselves up exclusively to their mystic love of God. Ignatius says still more plainly: "Love is of no importance to them. They care nothing for widows or orphans,

for the sick, or for them that are in bonds, for those set free, for them that hunger and thirst—they withdraw from the Eucharist and the prayer of the Church."

As against such conduct the watchword is proclaimed: hold fast by the unity of the Church and follow zealously after love in the Church. St Paul himself gave out this watchword in his last letters, for a special congregation in the Epistle to the Philippians, and for the Church as a whole in the so-called letter to the Ephesians. "Forbear with one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." But this thought of unity receives its most impressive expression in the high priestly prayer in the Gospel of St John. The unity of the Church amidst the Gnostic storms is the aim of the whole of this prayer, the last testament of Jesus to His disciples. Four times Jesus repeats the petition, "That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one." But not the prayer alone: the last discourses of Jesus taken as a whole, with the magnificent parable of the vine and the branches which forms their centre, with the new commandment of the love of the brethren and the promise of the spirit of truth—all aim at this duty of ecclesiastical unity. The mere setting forth of the ideal without any direct polemic imparts their wonderful impressiveness to these admonitions. Hence we can understand why

the love of the brethren receives such prominence in the First Epistle of St John, in the Pastoral epistles, and in Ignatius. It is not merely zeal for practical Christianity in accordance with the teaching of Jesus which is manifested therein—it is also zeal for ecclesiastical unity and ecclesiastical fellowship which is displayed in all the works of love enumerated by Ignatius. But however ardently this Church may close up its ranks and set forth unity as its aim, it excels the Gnostic sects in its wideheartedness and its universal democratic tendencies. Whilst the Gnostics limited salvation to the spiritual and claimed Christ for themselves, their ecclesiastical opponents, the authors of the Pastoral and Johannine epistles, are the advocates of universal salvation, of the equality of all men before God; God would have all men to be saved. Jesus is the redeemer of all men, the atonement for the whole world. So, too, they reject all the extra sacraments and the superior knowledge of the sectarians, and proclaim the equality of all Christians in knowledge and ripeness. For John, all such as believe are also such as have knowledge. "Ye have the unction of saints, and ye all know. Ye need not that anyone should teach you." And such, too, is the opinion of the author of the Pastoral letters. Faith is the knowledge of the truth. There is nothing higher than faith. Ignatius warns the Ephesians against the so-called sacrament of unction. "Why do we not then all become men of understanding, seeing we have received the knowledge of God, namely, Jesus Christ?" So the democratic character of Christianity is to be preserved; upon the broad basis of the faith no differences are

recognized save those of advance or retrogression in the walk in righteousness.

It was no insignificant or worthless portion of Christianity that the Church determined to defend at all costs against the Gnostics. Of course all that it defended was not of equal value. Christianity clings firmly to its foundation in the Old Testament. It carefully preserves the three articles in its creed which it took over from Judaism: the belief in God the creator, the central position of morality, the hope for the future. The struggle in which it likewise engaged for the sensuous Jewish eschatology and the rabbinical doctrine of inspiration was due to the special circumstances of the time, and did not do very much harm.

In like manner the Church retained the best elements in the Gospel of Jesus: His promise and His claims, the fundamental democratic trait in His character, with His search for the light. On no single point is the Gospel of Jesus on the side of the Gnostics. And thus far the reproach of having fallen away from the Church was fully justified.

The relation of the two contending parties to St Paul was, however, somewhat different. Both seized hold of a portion of his teaching; the Paul whom the Church finally retained was not the whole Paul, but one cut after an ecclesiastical pattern. It cannot be denied that the Gnostics understood many thoughts of St Paul better than the Church — his pessimism, his eschatology, his thoughts of the spirit and of redemption. The complete understanding of the Pauline soteriology ceases in the Church after the Gnostic controversy.

In opposition to the Gnostics far greater importance is attached to free will, to good works, and the body than was done by St Paul. Man's natural power and the force of character are estimated more highly, whilst the operations of the divine grace and of the Spirit are exclusively attached to the sacraments. With great tact, however, the Church discovered just what was of use to herself; it was at the same time that which was pre-eminently Christian—Faith, Love, the emphasis laid on works, the connection with the Old Testament. Nor can there be any doubt as to the side on which St Paul would have ranged himself. Can you fancy St Paul abandoning his Church in favour of any conventicling fanatics, however great their sanctity or superior knowledge? The Paul of the Pastoral letters resembles the real Paul—however far he is inferior to him in intellectual power—a hundred times more nearly than the Paul whom the Gnostics imagined for themselves.

The ecclesiastical teachers who remained faithful to the Old Testament, to the Gospel of Jesus, and of the apostle St Paul—that is, the St Paul of the Church—saved Christianity from the greatest danger, the subtlest temptation, with which it was ever threatened. Gnosticism was an attempt on the part of the chaos of peoples to absorb the Gospel of Jesus — an attempt which was doubly dangerous, because it assumed the appearance of a reaction and professed to have attained to a truer estimate and a clearer understanding of Christ and His power. The chaos of peoples declared its readiness to assign to Jesus the very highest position in the Gnostic religion of redemption if He were prepared to become the leader

of this its product, consisting of superstition and philosophy, of the superior wisdom, of the mysteries, of the ascetic ideal, of mysticism and of longing. It was the veritable Satan who said to Jesus: "All religions of the world are thine, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But the ecclesiastical teachers who fought the cause of Jesus withstood the temptation. Rather a poor, human, crucified Jesus with His serious morality than this king and god in the realm of superstition. There was honest reverence for reality, and honest indignation against shams in this their answer. There was something straightforward, too, a note of democratic defiance, of limited but thoroughly healthy Philistinism, a decided "No" to every kind of esoteric or aristocratic religion or religious epicurism. Indubitably we have here a reaction of the historic Jesus against the fantastic figment of human invention.

Would that the victory had been complete and the deliverance less imperfect! But in not a few places the chaos of heathen religions left a deep mark on ecclesiastical Christianity; the Church did not succeed in entirely repulsing the foreign elements. The Gnostic speculations were rejected, and the ecclesiastical thereby the more securely established. But are the latter a great deal better or more intelligent? The divinity of Christ and the Logos-Christ are heathen fabrications just as much as the Gnostic Soter, only it is a great deal more difficult to harmonize them with the human Jesus than was the case with the Gnostic Christology.

The defeat of the Gnostic mysteries was effected in like manner. They were reduced in number.

Instead of the many initiatory and other rites, the Church retained for the moment but two—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But a portion of the physical and ceremonial theology of redemption remained in the very centre of Christianity. This one portion was sufficient to hand over the Christian religion—for centuries and throughout whole countries—to the dominion of superstition. However great an emphasis was laid upon morality, it was impossible entirely to avert the danger which was conjured up by the sacraments.

Lastly, the ascetic ideal had to give way to the ethical of the Gospels. How loudly the author of the Pastoral epistles thunders against those who would hinder marriage. Yet the same author declares people who contracted a second marriage to be unfit for the office of bishop or deacon. This is a result of the ascetic view of marriage. The opinion that marriage is a stain and that virginity is consequently to be esteemed more highly as a more holy state, is still upheld by the Church. Here we have the source of the later monasticism. In spite, therefore, of many striking contrasts the Church and Gnosticism continue to share more than enough in common—intellectualism and dogma, the sacramental religion, the ascetic view of the sexual relation. It is exceedingly significant that these three factors find no support whatever in the teaching of Jesus, while they are upheld by several passages in the writings of St Paul. And indeed many words of the apostle are already accounted as highly as those of their master.

We must not, it is true, forget that the dangerous

attempt to break up the Christian Church into a number of little conventicles of fanatical saints was brilliantly defeated. The one Catholic Church comes forth from the struggle with the Gnostics mightier and more imposing than ever before, without having lost anything of its public, universal, and democratic character. Separatism appears to be entirely banished from it. There is only one kind of Christianity, that of faith, of love, of good works. And this was entirely in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, who did, it is true, recognize the difference between the leaders and the disciples, but suffered no class distinctions among the latter. Though the intention was excellent, the Church's protest was all in vain, however. The deep lines of cleavage existed as a matter of fact. There was, first of all, the difference between the philosophers and the laymen, the 'simple Christians'; and next there were the saints and the average worldly Christians. The first distinction was the result of the Hellenization of Christianity at the very time when it was materialized by the influx of international superstition. The latter came in the train of the ascetic and ecstatic tendencies noticeable since the days of St Paul. The Christianity founded by Jesus was a layman's religion, because in accordance with His teaching, all that really matters in God's sight are the fruits of righteousness, of purity of heart, of brotherly love, of trust in God. And that is why it accords neither theologian nor monk any preference. But even in the apostolic age, speculative, mystic and ascetic tendencies began to develop by the side of these great essentials. Hence, even at this early date, the existence of a twofold kind of Christianity,

which fact the Gnostics turned to the best account, and the ecclesiastical teachers could not suppress with the best will in the world.

And yet, after all deductions, the Church's victory was the victory of the Gospel within the limits that were alone possible at that time. The Church's teachers, the opponents of the Gnostics, were the representatives of the old Christianity, such as they had received it, such as they understood it. No blame, therefore, can attach to them. Their merit is to have recognized the attainable and to have attained it. In so doing, they secured a fresh lease of life for Christianity.

The forcible measures employed by the Church.

The conflict between the Catholic and Gnostic teachers was not carried on to the end with merely spiritual weapons. Yes, however bitter it may be to have to make the confession, the spiritual weapons of the Church would not have sufficed to gain the victory. The struggle began when the Church's institutions were exceedingly primitive, the products of enthusiasm. The men of the Spirit—apostles, prophets, and teachers—were as yet the only authorities besides the words of Jesus, and the canon of the Old Testament. Complete freedom of teaching prevailed, and great freedom in public worship, with a broad-hearted extension of the name of Christian to all who called Jesus Lord. This state of things endangered the existence of the congregations and threatened them with dissolution, while it rendered the clear distinction of the opposing forces exceedingly difficult. The employment of forcible

measures by the Church becomes intelligible, and partly, at least, excusable, when we take this desperate position into account.

Three measures were taken by the Church to put an end to the prevailing license. 1. The teachers were placed under Church authority. 2. Public worship was centralized and the government of the congregations entrusted to the bishops. 3. Heretics were excluded and condemned. The birth of the Catholic Church dates from the employment of these measures.

1. The only means of setting some limit to the chaos of conflicting opinions appeared to be to place the teachers under Church authority. What was the use of refuting erroneous opinions as long as each teacher could appeal to the Spirit? The question had to be put: Is any and every person to be allowed to bring forward his new doctrines on the authority of the Spirit? The question needed but to be put to be answered in the negative.

The authors of the Pastoral letters and of the letters of St John, and Ignatius, are united in their efforts to put an end to the freedom of teaching. But they use two different means.

There was first of all the theory that the bishop as such possessed the Spirit. The object of this theory was to create fitting instruments for the office of teaching. The spirit of knowledge is in the possession of few, the apostles and their successors, the bishops. They alone preserve the divine tradition (gift — depositum). The spirit of truth is handed on in succession from one to another by the laying on of hands. The Pastoral letters, which were the first to

set up this juridical theory, wanted the presbyters themselves to exercise the teachers' office. But this expectation was doomed to be disappointed. The officials had too much to do, and there were teachers besides. Nevertheless, the kernel of this theory won the day, that is, the doctrine of the 'depositum' in the hands of the bishops. We find it later in Irenæus and on a more secure foundation, connected, namely, with the Roman theory of apostolic succession. It was now no longer necessary that the bishop should likewise be a teacher. Merely as bishop, the purity of the teaching was guaranteed in his case. So Ignatius conceived of his position. He was acquainted with bishops to whom the gift of spiritual speech had not been vouchsafed. They were better able to keep silent. It mattered not! In spite of all, the bishop is the representative of God. He who does not keep to the bishop—even in teaching—is far from God.

Next we have the theory of the Rule of Faith. The aim of this theory is itself to create the pure doctrine. It is significant that we come across it in the Johannine epistles. The author of these epistles is no ecclesiastic, nor is the building up of ecclesiastical office his object. His aim is rather to set up a principle which would make a judge of every Christian and not merely of the bishop. We are to try the spirits, *i.e.*, the prophets and the teachers, whether their spirit is of God or not. Knowledge of their teaching is sufficient for this examination. He whose teaching is Docetic is not of God. "Jesus Christ come in the flesh": such is here the *regula fidei*. Thereby John attains the same end as the Pastoral

epistles, only by a shorter road, without strengthening the position of the bishops.

But the setting up of the Rule of Faith is older than John. The author of the Pastoral epistles is in reality acquainted with both of these ecclesiastical measures. There was an old "preaching of Christ," a short summary of all that was essential in Christology. St Paul had taught his congregations such an epitome: died, buried, raised again on the third day. Additions were gradually made to this short confession, and first of all without any reference to Gnostic opponents, the object being merely to instruct new converts. The author of the Pastoral letters is acquainted with the following new clauses: Of the house of David; under Pontius Pilate; who shall come to judge the quick and the dead. The omission of all mention of the Virgin Birth, as well as the older view of the descent from David, are sufficient proof that at this time the story of the miraculous birth had not as yet received official sanction. It is only when we come to Ignatius that we find this further addition to the summary, though the Davidic descent is as yet by no means suppressed. His statement is either: of the house of David, of Mary; or, of the seed of David, of the Holy Ghost. Soon after this the Davidic descent was either removed from the creed altogether—so in the old Roman form: of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary—or ascribed to Mary. This is what Justin does: Of Mary the Virgin, who is of the house of David. These additions and changes, however, are not to be ascribed to any anti-gnostic tendency, but to the necessity of harmonizing the catechetical teaching with the widened

Faith. We are even told that Gnostics managed to interpret this teaching of Christ docetically. And yet the creed was of use in the conflict with the Gnostics. It furnished a concise formulary of the principal articles of the Faith. On this the Christians could take their stand, and to this they could retreat when they were hard pressed at any point. Ignatius needs but to add his 'verily' to the 'born, died,' etc., and he has already driven the Gnostics from the field. The congregations were instructed to interpret the creed in a strictly anti-gnostic sense, and to use it as a defensive weapon. At the beginning of the second century it was used here and there in connection with the baptismal confession of belief in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From this combination arose the Apostles' Creed. Where it was used first of all we do not know.

Two conditions were now clearly laid down for the teachers:—

1. Whenever a teacher wishes to exercise his vocation he has to be approved by the bishop and be licensed by him.

2. Every teacher is strictly bound by the *regula fidei.*

Important alterations followed hence. The withdrawal of the free permission to teach implied negatively the cessation of free theological production, positively the exaltation of the ecclesiastical tradition, *i.e.*, of the apostles and their writings, into the place of the sacred canon.

One characteristic of the sub-apostolic age is the immense increase in the esteem with which the first apostles were regarded. All the Gospels, the Acts,

the First Epistle of St Clement, Ignatius, the Epistle of St Jude, the Didache, all go to prove this point. The men of the earlier age—St Paul above all others—had thought in the Spirit. The men of this age seek their inspiration in the thoughts of the apostles instead of depending directly upon the Spirit. The apostles are the Spirit. The farewell discourses in St John are especially instructive in this connection. Here we find the last trace of the old theory of the Spirit, but only in favour of the apostolic traditions. The apostles are led by the Spirit into all truth. In the apostles the character of Jesus receives its full illumination; *i.e.*, it is understood in all its depth and breadth, and yet so that nothing really new is added, but we merely have a reminiscence of that which Jesus taught before. The mark of a Christian, according to St John, is the abiding in, *i.e.*, the clinging to, Tradition, contrasted with the progressive tendencies of the Gnostics. It is now, by means of this theory of the special gift of the Spirit to the apostles, that the opinion is gradually developed that the apostles have once for all authentically and exhaustively described the person and the work of Christ, and that the task of later theology is practically the tradition of the apostolic interpretation. As early a writing as the Book of the Acts corroborates this opinion by its canonization of the apostles and glorification of the golden apostolic age, compared with which the author's own age appears a time of decadence. To the prevalence of this opinion must be ascribed, too, the composition of numerous pseudonymic apostolic writings—above all, of the Catholic epistles. Had there not been

a very strong feeling of decadence abroad, men would never have gone to such lengths.

As a rule these writings are of a perfectly harmless character, and at least they do not threaten the stability of the Rule of Faith by any originality. We may safely conclude, *e.g.*, from the occurrence of the idea of Christ's descent into Hades in the First Epistle of St Peter, that it had already found acceptance in a considerable portion of the Church. Later, to be sure, it found its way even into the Creed.

The increased reverence paid to the apostles and their work resulted in the formation of the canon of the New Testament. At first we have, of course, just a collection of the apostolic writings. The process was, however, a very rapid one. The first letter of St Clement, written from Rome to Corinth towards the end of the first century, assumes its readers' acquaintance with a number of the letters of St Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Synoptic Gospels, the Acts. Two decades later we find in Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, mention of all four Gospels, the letters of St Paul, including the Pastoral epistles, and the Apocalypse; shortly afterwards in Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, the Acts, and the First of St Peter and the First of St John in addition. The Epistle of Polycarp is especially instructive for the rapid growth of the canon. The writer is a widely respected bishop, who is said to have had personal intercourse with the apostles, or, at least, with the disciples of Jesus. And yet he gives us scarcely anything but quotations from the later writings of the New Testament, scarcely anything of his own. In so doing he presupposes the

possession of copies of the apostolic writings by the larger congregations in their archives. Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis and contemporary of Polycarp, shows us what great interest was still taken in the oral tradition of the apostles. He travelled about everywhere inquiring for sayings of the apostles, and based upon these inquiries he published a collection of apocryphal sayings and legends in his "Exposition of Oracles of the Lord." But the presupposition of his whole work is that everyone is acquainted with the main features of the gospel story as contained in the written Gospels. The commencement of the formation of the canon really dates from very soon after the turn of the first century. It is marked by two characteristics, the collection of the apostolic writings and the consciousness of living in a decadent age. Everything else—the investment of the book with its sacred character, its elevation to the level of the Old Testament—flows from these without breach of continuity or sense of innovation.

The formation of the canon marks the end of the first age of Christianity under certain aspects. The old Christianity projects itself, as it were, into the canon, and sets up its own past as an object of veneration. Now, too, the chief motive power of the first great age, hero-worship, may be said to be no longer operative.

Instead of the heroes themselves, their writings are accessible as a written law. Here, half a century before Montanism, we have the death-knell of prophecy and of the ever-progressive spirit. The Church of tradition has been formed. Its teachers, Justin and Irenæus, are right in maintaining that

they are merely conservative, that they hand on unchanged to their successors the old and sacred deposit which they have themselves received.

2. Nor was the second measure, the centralization of public worship and Church government in the hands of the bishop—who was almost everywhere in an independent position of supremacy—less decisive.

In the old time it was the itinerant preachers who exercised all the authority and were counted as the divine instruments for the whole Church. As often as they came to a congregation they took the precedence over all the church officers. It was supposed, *e.g.*, that a prophet could pray more effectively than a bishop. Here we have the key to the power which the Gnostics managed to acquire. Owing to these peculiar circumstances they were able to gain adherents in every congregation, and to form branches of their schools and sects in every locality. We have therefore to picture to ourselves congregations in which Catholic and Gnostic societies existed happily side by side, just as did the various family churches which Rom. xvi. presupposes. Indeed the progress of Gnosticism was in a great measure due to the fascination which preachers coming from outside always exercise in a congregation.

If, therefore, Gnosticism was to be extirpated, the freedom of public worship and of ecclesiastical action must be limited. This had not as yet happened at the time of the Pastoral letters. And yet things were pointing that way. We read, for instance: He that "consenteth not to sound words and to the doctrine which is according to godliness (which surely includes the services of the Church), is

puffed up." Definite measures of centralization, however, are still wanting; nor can we be surprised at this as long as the bishop is merely the president of the college of presbyters. Public worship can only be effectively centralized when episcopacy has become monarchical.

The Johannine letters, too, which probably date but a few years later than the Pastoral epistles, furnish us with proofs that public worship had not been completely centralized by the time of their composition. In the Third Epistle we still find the old itinerant preachers wandering about and trying to gain a hearing, while the head of one particular congregation—presumably the bishop—refuses to give them a reception. Here we have both tendencies actively at work—that to the monarchical episcopate (Diotrephes, who very much wishes to be the first); and that to the centralization of public worship—the exclusion of the itinerant preachers.

Both tendencies reach their culminating point in Ignatius. The monarchical episcopate must now be presupposed, at least for Asia Minor and Syria. There is no longer any need to struggle for that. But the struggle still continues for the centralization of public worship and church government in the hands of the bishop and the college of elders. That is the only weapon wherewith to ward off the danger of heresy. And it is something relatively new, for the greatest emphasis is laid upon it. So entirely does it engross the thoughts of Ignatius, that he speaks of it even in an ecstatic condition. Once at Philadelphia, he cried out in the midst of an assembly in a loud voice, the voice of God: "Keep to the bishop and

the presbytery and the deacons." Afterwards he assures the men of Philadelphia that he had had no previous knowledge of divisions in the congregation: his utterance had been inspired by the Spirit. And no wonder, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. On the lips of Ignatius the word bishop occurs about as frequently as the phrase 'kingdom of God' did on those of the previous generations of Christians.

Never did any man use more extravagant language about the ecclesiastical importance of the bishop than Ignatius. To the people he says: "Where the shepherd is, there do ye follow as sheep"; "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the multitude be; just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Church Catholic." Apart from bishop, presbyters, and deacons there is no Church. "As many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are with the bishop." The practical consequence of this exaltation of the episcopate is the one command which runs through all the letters alike: "Let no man do anything without the bishop"; "He that doeth anything without the knowledge of the bishop serveth the devil." That Eucharist is alone to be held lawful which is celebrated by the bishop or by his duly appointed deputy. "It is not allowable either to baptize or to hold a love feast without the bishop, but whatsoever he may approve, this also is well-pleasing to God." Those who marry are likewise to obtain the bishop's consent to their union. "One body of Christ, one cup, one altar, just as there is one bishop together with his presbyters and deacons." So speaks the first sacerdotalist.

Ignatius attained his aim. The centralization of public worship set up an effective barrier against the heretics. There was nothing left for them to do but to become schismatics, and to establish rival congregations of their own. Rarely, however, did they attain to any efficient form of organization. Tertullian speaks of this as their weakest point. And this is what we should expect, for where the Spirit rules there can be no strict ecclesiastical order.

The Church won the day, but at the cost of uniformity and rigidity. The old freedom vanished, and with it the rich and varied life of the first age.

3. The prohibition of the freedom of teaching and of worship involved the exclusion of all those who would not conform to the new regulations. This last measure is the most to be regretted, because it exalted fanaticism into a place of permanent power in the Church.

The Church had indeed been narrow and even fanatical since the days of St Paul, but only with regard to those that were without, to the unbelievers. Every unbelieving Jew or heathen was, it is true, counted capable of redemption; as yet, however, he was a child of wrath, in the toils of the devil and on the road to damnation. For this, however, there was compensation in the earlier age of which we are speaking. There was great liberality towards all that were within the Church. Every one who called Jesus his Lord was accounted a member of the congregation. It mattered not under what category his Gnosis fell. Hence the rich variety of views built up upon the same faith.

But with the commencement of the struggle

against Gnosticism all this was altered. The conceptions of heresy and of orthodoxy are now formed. The word 'heresy' was at first used in no bad sense; it meant any particular tendency and was applied at first especially to particular doctrines, and then also to the party which gathered round about them. So Josephus and St Luke speak of the 'heresy' of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, of the Essenes; the Christians, too, were called "the heresy of the Nazarenes"—this, of course, rather by their Jewish opponents. In St Paul, on the other hand, the word already signifies divisions which do indeed appear of necessity in the congregation, but originate in the flesh and are contrary to the divine will. But there is nothing to show that he had dogmatic divisions in view. It was only the age of the Gnostic struggle that produced this ecclesiastical use of the word. The Epistle to Titus is the earliest document in which 'heretics' are mentioned. The heretic is to be admonished once, twice; if he does not yield he is to be rejected, for such a man is perverted and stands self-condemned. Here we have the new conception of heresy. Heresy is deviation from the teaching of the Church, and as such involves exclusion and condemnation. Opposed to it is assent to the pure doctrine of the Church, orthodoxy. We first meet with this expression—almost verbally—in Justin Martyr.

The Pastoral epistles are also our oldest document for all the virulence of ecclesiastical fanaticism. Their polemics against the Gnostics are characterized by ecclesiastical haughtiness, insinuations of immorality, and the condemnation of their opponents

as 'devilish.' Of the three the last is the most easily comprehensible in the case of theologians who imagined the whole kingdom of the air to be filled with devils, and who, moreover, had Paul for their master, who himself saw a temptation of the devil in every other gospel but his own. So we read that those that set themselves up in opposition are in the snares of Satan; they give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Most objectionable of all, however, is the presupposition of immorality which the pseudo-Paul invites all his ecclesiastical followers to harbour in the case of all heretics. He is fond of discharging long catalogues of vices upon his opponents, in which, besides the faults which they really had, a number of such were likewise ascribed to them which are presupposed in the case of every godless individual. You may safely assume of every one who shows a tendency to Gnostic ideas that he is a morally bad man. "Some have thrust from them their good conscience, and so have made shipwreck concerning the faith." It is only the lusts of the Christians, *i.e.*, their moral corruption, which are the cause of the increase of the opponents. The heretical teachers are one and all "seared in their own conscience." We shall soon see that this kind of polemics did not remain ineffective. To cast suspicion upon heretics was henceforth one of the characteristics of orthodoxy. If we turn to the practical measures that were employed, we shall find that the bishop was to make as short work as possible of the heretics. He is to shun disputations. He is not to make much ado. Let him admonish them once, twice. If that is of no avail he must

thrust them out. The Church must hand over her opponents to Satan, just as St Paul handed over the incestuous person. This throws a bright light on the difference between the two ages. Deviation from right doctrine is punished now, as was once a moral crime.

The Johannine epistles are worthy successors of the Pastoral, as their author, the so-called apostle of love, shows himself to be a past master in the art of judging and condemning. Just as he exhibited his narrow hatred in the Gospel against the unbelieving Jews, those children of the devil, those thieves and robbers, so here in the epistle he manifests the same hatred against all the brethren who do not think exactly as he does. The Gnostics are liars in whom the truth dwelleth not, and who walk in darkness. If you would understand them aright, you must see anti-Christ in them; their existence is only comprehensible as a temptation of the devil in the last hour. The second letter draws the practical conclusion: as all Docetists are deceivers and anti-Christs, and have not God, they are not to be received into the house, nor are they to be given greeting, for he that giveth them greeting partaketh in their evil works.

The anecdote which Irenæus relates of St John agrees very well with this passage: When St John on one occasion learnt that Cerinthus was in the same public bathing establishment as himself, he rushed out of it, exclaiming, "Let us flee lest the house break down upon us, for Cerinthus is within, the enemy of the truth." Should this anecdote be historically reliable, the Johannine Epistles have certainly faithfully reproduced the spirit of this John.

As Ignatius and Polycarp are acquainted with both

Pastoral and Johannine epistles, they afford a proof of the eminent success attained by the practice of passing judgment upon heretics, common among the older teachers. Ignatius continues to assume the immorality of the Gnostics: "He that does anything without the bishop is not clean in his conscience. The adversaries have no good conscience, as they do not come to the principal assembly." And there is the same reproach of having sprung from the devil. "Their worship is that of Satan, and their unction is from below. Let all men shun in them the snares and the wiles of the prince of this world. They are no plants which the heavenly Father hath planted, but tares which bring forth deadly fruit. Every teacher that is an heretic shall come into the unquenchable fire, and so likewise whosoever gives heed to him. Whosoever follows a schismatic cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." The practical result of which was that the orthodox Christians were to treat their heretical brothers as not belonging to the Church—nay, as even worse than infidels. For he that followeth not the bishop, hath no part in the Church. "Every Docetist blasphemeth the Lord, and is an atheist, *i.e.*, an unbeliever. It is only through their evil cunning that they bear the Christian name. Avoid them like wild beasts, for they are mad dogs; they lie in wait for you and bite you; they are brutes in human shape. Not merely are you not to receive them into your houses, you are not even to meet them; all that you may do is to pray for them that they be converted"—a hard matter, to be sure. Ignatius shrinks from uttering the names of the unbelievers, and even from thinking of them. He

forbids all men to speak of the Gnostics either in public or in private. In all this hatred of his against the heretics, he has a trusty henchman in his friend Polycarp. "Every man that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is an anti-Christ. And whosoever confesseth not the testimony of the cross is of the devil, and whosoever perverteth the words of the Lord according to his own lusts, and denieth either the resurrection or the judgment, he is the first-born of Satan." Once when Polycarp, meeting Marcion, was asked by the latter whether he did not know him, he answered, "Yes, I know thee—the first-born of Satan." Such was the fruit of the seed sown by the authors of the Pastoral and Johannine epistles.

True, even now, the door stood open for the Gnostics to return. Only they had to do penance. Gnostic views were counted to be exactly as bad as gross moral sins. One great advantage was, it must be admitted, gained by this hateful device. All doubt and ambiguity was at an end. Within the Church — the boast was justified — there was one faith, one confession.

But the Christians who remained faithful to this confession had lost qualities which their Lord and Master had esteemed most highly — love and humanity. The very prayer for the conversion of the Gnostics is more Pharisaic than Christian, and does not spring from simple human love.

The result of this division into the two camps of orthodoxy and heresy was that Christianity now entirely acquired a scholastic dogmatic character, and in a very serious degree lost its original peculiarity—that of being an essentially ethical religion.

Originally this scholastic dogmatic character was completely foreign to Christianity. Christianity was a layman's personal religion under the guidance of a prophet. It was entirely undogmatic. The only article in its creed, Jesus is the Messiah, belonged to the sphere of religious hope, and was not therefore capable of proof.

Controversies with the Jews brought about the first symptoms of change. No documents, it is true, have come down to us from the very earliest age, but all that we can gather from the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St John indicates that anti-Jewish apologetics soon degenerated into the squabbles of rival schools. The controversy ranged over every variety of subject, but the most important of all is left untouched. What the Christians wanted to do was to harmonize the picture of Jesus with the dogmas of the Messianic theology, and to prove that Jesus was after all the Messiah in accordance with Jewish dogma. As though the cause of Jesus had thereby been advanced in the very slightest degree! That a redemptive power went forth from Jesus, that through the simplification of His message He burst Judaism asunder—all this was disregarded as unimportant. And so in very deed Christianity became a heresy, a separate opinion, like that of the Pharisees, though, unlike theirs, not ecclesiastically tolerated; it was too revolutionary for that.

Under these circumstances it must be considered fortunate that Christianity was transferred to Greek soil. If it took root here at all, it must be as a new religion, for the squabbles of the Messianic theology were unintelligible to the Greeks. Numberless

dogmatic presuppositions are, it is true, at the basis of St Paul's preaching, but what the apostle sets forth is above all a way of salvation in view of the day of judgment; he takes the Spirit and miracles into account, and postulates a new creature in Christ Jesus. The oldest Gentile Christian religion was the worship of the Divinity of Christ. Whosoever confessed this religion belonged to no school, but was one of the brethren. No Christian teacher of the earliest age compared or opposed Christian dogmas to the dogmas of the schools of the philosophers.

Gnosticism provoked the crisis which sooner or later must have been brought about through the influence of Greek philosophy. The Gnostics' aim was to understand the revelation given to faith, and to adapt it to their own opinions, while they were all the while under the delusion that in so doing they were inspired of the Spirit. It was not long before differences of opinion and heresies manifested themselves. Just as the Jewish Rabbis variously interpreted the Oracles of the Old Testament, and then split up into different schools, so each Gnostic teacher cut the Christian faith after his own pattern, and a number of schools and a whole multitude of dogmas resulted thence. The dogmas were not the really important thing to the Gnostics themselves, but it was these that first engaged the attention of the Christian teachers, and became the object of their criticism and attack.

Now in controverting the Gnostics, the ecclesiastical teachers adapted themselves to their opponents' scholastic view of Christianity. All that they did was to oppose ecclesiastical to Gnostic dogmas. The

development of the struggle for the Rule of Faith signifies the victory of scholastic Christianity: in other words, the greatest importance is attached to pure doctrine; on adhesion to this doctrine depends the right to bear the name of Christian; where the purity of the doctrine is in the slightest degree impaired, there is no Church, no Christianity. Christianity is identified with orthodoxy.

The religion of Christ thus underwent the greatest change of all. The practical and the personal no longer formed, as they did before, the core and centre of the faith. Originally the true marks of Christianity were the ardour of its hope, the strictness of the new life, inspiration for Jesus. Whosoever had suffered himself to be redeemed by Jesus so as to attain the freedom of a child of God, was accounted a Christian. No one had inquired as to the dogmas which he accepted. And so the oldest community was a fellowship united by the same enthusiasm and working for the same ends. This conception of Christianity was supplanted in the course of the struggle with Gnosticism by the scholastic, dogmatic view. The new confessional Christianity is scholastic.

The expression 'Catholic Church' first occurs in Ignatius in the course of the Gnostic controversy, and there signifies the Church universal, which embraces the whole of Christianity as contrasted with the particular congregations. It then expressed a geographical idea, and had not as yet become a battle-cry against the heretics. But, as a matter of fact, it is quite true to say that from this time

onward Catholics and heretics stood opposed to each other. For indeed it is only since we have Gnostic theologies and Gnostic Churches that we have a Catholic theology and a Catholic Church. The whole of Catholicism arose as the reaction of the Church against the foreign influences of the chaos of heathen religions. In so far it was an innovation. The benefits which it conferred from the very first certainly outweigh any injury which it inflicted. It rallied all the sound, ethical and evangelical forces in the old Christianity, welded them together, and inspired them with strength for the victorious contest. It saved the Christian religion from being entirely engulfed in the maëlstrom of peoples and religions, and secured for it a safe and quiet future and the victory over the world.

Gnosticism made of Jesus a divine phantom, Catholicism rescued the true Jesus. In any case we are here more in the line of the direct succession from primitive Christianity. The mischievous innovation which it introduced was the exaltation of orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism into leading marks of Christianity, in contrast to the freedom of teaching and the freedom from Church discipline that characterized the Gnostics. Henceforth assent to the pure doctrine and subjection to the bishop are a *sine qua non* in the case of every Christian. The old leading marks are secondary matters. In other words, hostility towards the unbelieving Christians outside of the Church comes to be a sign of true Christianity. And this state of things was not, alas, materially altered at the Reformation.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER XI.

The Fate of Jesus.

The origin of the New Testament is the last important event in the history of the early days of Christianity, and at the same time that which most deeply influenced all successive centuries. It is most intimately bound up with the struggle against the Gnostics, because this implied the cessation of the original productive activity and the consecration of tradition, *i.e.*, of the apostles and their writings. Its sources, however, are to be traced to far older fundamental presuppositions of Christianity.

Christianity was bound to obtain its New Testament, because Judaism had its Old Testament. Originating as it did from a book-religion and developing in the constant veneration of the sacred writings, it was inevitably destined itself to become a book-religion in its turn. Jesus, it is true, wished to set His disciples free from the learning of the Scribes, and St Paul gave as his watchword: "Not

the letter but the Spirit." The great mass of Christians, however, remained as incapable as before of conceiving religion without the sacred book, and the Pauline gnosis confirmed them in this tendency. One can never overestimate the power of such a tradition. Individuals can emancipate themselves from it, but not the community. Is not the fact that the whole of the Old Testament could become a Christian book very striking in itself? How many chapters, how many books, it contains which directly contradict Jesus and the Gospel! And yet the question whether it should be received or not was never even raised in the Church. It is of a text which must have sounded exceptionally strange to Christian ears, "I said, Ye are Gods," that Jesus says (according to the Fourth Gospel), "The Scripture cannot be broken." When people, however, have conceptions such as these of a book-religion so completely engrained in them from earliest infancy, it may confidently be predicted that they are certain sooner or later to obtain their own sacred writings. Thus ultimately the origin of the New Testament can be traced back to the consecration of the book of the law, Deuteronomy, under King Josiah. It was only a question of time when the veneration that was felt for the Old Testament should be extended to Christian writings as well.

But the origin of the New Testament was likewise necessitated by the circumstances of Christianity itself. St Paul, the founder of the science of the Church, is the father of the New Testament, although he himself certainly thought of nothing less than that. It was he who first clearly contrasted Chris-

tian thought as revealed knowledge with all non-Christian thought as natural knowledge. Christian writings did not enter into his consideration here in the very remotest degree; but it is plain that a later generation could as easily ascribe Christian writings to the inspiration of the Spirit as St Paul ascribed glossolaly and prophecy. Here, too, we have the only justification for the separation of the New Testament, not from other Christian writings, but from the writings of other peoples and religions. The Christian Scriptures alone are the product of the Christian spirit—or ought to be, one thinks of the Apocalypse!—no other book is the fruit of this Spirit. The more foreign elements the Church took over in course of time from Judaism and Hellenism, the more important it was that it should possess in these writings of the earliest Christian age a constant standard for that which was Christian or in conformity with the Church. At the same time, of course, the argument from Scripture is subject to the same limitations as that from the theory of the Spirit in which it originates—both alike appeal exclusively to such as are Christians already; no one else can be convinced by them.

It was the struggle with the Gnostics and, generally speaking, certain definite conditions, which determined the selection of these Christian writings. The first decade of the second century seems to fulfil these conditions best. The fact that the writings which form the New Testament towards the end of the second century were already—with scarcely any exceptions — in the possession of the ecclesiastical writers Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias, at the be-

ginning of the century, and that no others come under the same category, would appear to lead us inevitably to such a conclusion. This applies to the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of St Paul with the Pastoral epistles, the First letter of St Peter, the First of St John, the Apocalypse. The Epistle of St Jude is too short to admit of our saying definitely that it was known to these writers. But the Second Epistle of St Peter shows us that it was well known at a time when apostolic writings were still manufactured. I expressly do not say that their writings formed the canon at this early date. The only fact that it is important here to establish is that teachers of the Church found edification and instruction in these writings and in none others, and made copious use of them. Our insight into the growth of the idea of the canon is unfortunately very much less clear than it would otherwise have been, owing to the fact that of Justin's writings (dating from about the middle of the century) only apologies and no ecclesiastical tracts have been preserved. For in controversial writings intended for heathen or Jewish readers there was no place for any appeal to the authority of St Paul, and it is a mere chance that we obtain an accurate knowledge of the esteem in which the Apocalypse was held in the Church. The only facts that we can establish are that the Epistles of St Paul, the Gospel of St John, and the Acts, belong to the necessary presuppositions of Justin's writings. We learn from a genuine fragment that he had a controversy with the Gnostics concerning a passage in St Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 50. It is probable, therefore, that

his statement as to the reading of the gospels together with the law and the prophets in the public services does not tell us—*i.e.*, his heathen readers—everything. In addition to this we have the frequent use of the New Testament writings in the contemporaneous Gnostic schools, which certainly dates from a later time than that of the Church. All these considerations incline us to conclude that the decisive occurrences of the collection and selection of these writings out of the whole mass of Christian literature took place while the second century was still in its infancy.

Now if the New Testament as a whole dates from the beginning of the second century, its theology must in the main be the theology of this period. The theology of the New Testament is the theology of Catholicism, as it originates at the beginning of the second century. However much older the single writings may be, however much unwritten tradition those who collected and ordered the writings may have respected in addition, the body of writings as a whole must have corresponded to their thoughts and feelings. Here we have a fact which deserves notice even to-day. When the New Testament as a whole is our authority, then we are simply submitting to the judgment of the Church at the beginning of the second century. It is not the words of Jesus or the letters of St Paul which are then our final court of appeal, but the thoughts of the ecclesiastics who selected the words of Jesus and the letters of St Paul together with documents of a later date to form the canon of the Christian scriptures.

The New Testament is composed of two strata of

documents. The older includes the Synoptics, the genuine letters of St Paul, the Apocalypse; the later the Gospel of St John, the Acts, the Pastoral epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John. The two strata are to be conceived of in such a relation that the older writings are occasionally to be interpreted by the later, and occasionally they are obscured by them—that is the world-historic significance of the New Testament.

The writings of the older strata are our real authority for the history of the earliest Christian age—the world's greatest possession for all time. A grand and savage freedom characterizes them all, though in varying degrees. What St Paul has left us has come down to us with the least change, a series of occasional letters called forth simply and solely by the needs of the moment, revealing the man just as he was, rough-hewn, without any artificial shaping or polishing. The letter to the Ephesians is the only one that here and there strikes one as not belonging to the series, but that which it shares in common with his other letters outweighs in importance the marks of a later age. If only Jesus could speak to us as directly as His apostle, how gladly we would surrender all the gospels! In the best of cases it is but a broken impression that we obtain of Him. We have lost the oldest written sources, the collection of logia from which Matthew and Luke derived their discourses, and much else besides. No writing of an eyewitness of Jesus has come down to us. Even St Mark's narrative would have been incorporated by the first and third evangelists in their compilations and so deprived of its separate existence had they been able to do as they wished. In spite of the amputated

conclusion it is a great piece of good fortune that they did not succeed. Although entirely the product of the faith of the Church, it is the least ecclesiastical writing about Jesus. It describes the prophet, the worker of miracles, the Messiah, the Son of God, with such ardent enthusiasm, so heroic, so great, and yet so human, that ten years later it could not be tolerated. Matthew and Luke created the great ecclesiastical gospels; the former, more nearly allied to Jewish thought and speech, writes rather more legally and with ecclesiastical institutions in view, the latter for the Gentile Church; he is edifying, and would touch the feelings even at the cost of stern truth. The gospels of the infancy and the conclusions are characteristic of this later age. All that was missed in the life of Jesus was put into the mouth of the risen Lord: the mission to the Gentiles, baptism, the christianizing of the Old Testament. These two Gospels already mark the transition to the second group. Then, again, the Apocalypse is a book that stands by itself—it is a prophecy and a war-cry, and both are inspired by the Holy Ghost. It stands in the New Testament as the book of the Spirit, to which one pointed with pride in controversy with the Jews abandoned by God's Spirit.

We must endeavour to realize what inconvenient problems were occasioned for the later age by the existence of these writings. In the first place, Jesus and St Paul by no means agreed together. In Jesus we have the promise of the kingdom of God and the call to do God's will in order to enter into this kingdom. Such are the essential contents of the preaching of Jesus in all three Synoptists. The

person of Jesus is painted with ecclesiastical enthusiasm, but the preaching of Jesus is not ecclesiastical until we come to the conclusions. Nowhere do we find blessedness attached to Jesus alone, or faith in Him as the Messiah demanded by Himself. The whole groundwork of the synoptical tradition originates from a time when there was as yet no Church. The gospel of St Paul is of an entirely different nature: the heavenly Son of God who was crucified for our salvation and rose again, and the way to salvation, faith in the grace of God that was manifested in Him. How can these two be harmonized? And even if the Church decided to follow St Paul—and in all essential points it did follow his guidance—then it had some very hard knots to untie in his own person. He stands there in complete isolation, in eager contest with the emissaries from Jerusalem, not over-friendly to the twelve themselves, united to Jesus Himself by nothing but a vision. And his gospel is unusually severe and stern, hostile to the law, dangerous to morality itself when it proclaims the impossibility of the fulfilment of the law and the supremacy of the Spirit instead of the law. True, St Paul is a Churchman, but how free he is, how enthusiastic, how indifferent as to whether he creates lasting ecclesiastical organizations for later generations. The genuine historic Paul looks down like a giant from a steep and solitary height upon a race of dwarfs.

It is true that the early Christians scarcely realized these contradictions and problems as sharply as this. Had this been the case, then all the

writings of the second strata must of course have been conscious forgeries composed with the set purpose of effacing the picture of the first age by superimposing another. And then, too, we should have expected some reactionary movement to have been started long before Marcion stood forth as the enthusiastic champion of the older era. Such a supposition is unnecessary. The smoothing of rough corners and edges, the harmonizing of contradictions, the setting of Jesus and St Paul in an ecclesiastical framework, can be explained for the most part, without the assumption of any conscious intention, through the rapid development of catholic modes of thought in the second and third generation. We can realize this process very vividly when we examine the way in which the synoptic sources have been edited. It was a perfectly natural assumption for the later evangelists to suppose Jesus to have been really such as they depicted Him in their additions and corrections. They are entirely innocent of so wanton an act as the conscious adaptation of the historic picture of Christ to the imaginings of their own faith. On the contrary, they fancy that it is the earlier evangelists, who are their models, who have made mistakes and omissions which they correct, fully supposing themselves to be in the right. And then, too, we must not forget that this later age finds many points of contact—real or imaginary—in the old writings for its own favourite thoughts. Certain expressions and verses in St Mark which were intended in anything rather than a Pauline sense suggested to it quite naturally Pauline thoughts of the Son of God, of the atoning death of Jesus, of

universal salvation, of the necessity of faith. Before the Gospel of St John was written the Synoptists were read in a Johannine, that is, a Pauline sense. No very great power of imagination is needed in order to understand how this could be done, as three-fourths of the readers of the Bible still read it in exactly the same way, and the most popular devotional literature effectually prevents the possibility of any other method of interpretation. In reading the Sermon on the Mount faith in Jesus is simply taken as a natural presupposition. The sayings and parables of the forgiveness of sins through the love of God, our Heavenly Father, are interpreted with the tacit addition "for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ." So our readers of the Bible read the Gospels to-day, and so, too, the Christians read them at the end of the first century. Now just as Jesus was here interpreted in an ecclesiastical and Pauline sense, so St Paul had also to suffer his letters to be interpreted in an altogether different sense from that in which they were written. They were read as the letters of a talented ecclesiastic and preacher, whereas they had been written by a revolutionary and altogether original genius. This generation, which exalted the continuity of tradition into the canon of truth, had no understanding for his originality and independence, for his antithesis "of God and not of men." They were disposed to cover up the disputes of Christians with each other under the mantle of love. So great was the change that had come over the whole ecclesiastical position, that as often as they read about the sharp antitheses of his theology they endeavoured to harmonize and to minimize them,

while edifying themselves with his polemics against the Jews, with his comforting words as to grace and faith, with his lofty morality and the inexhaustible treasures of practical ecclesiastical wisdom in his letters. All this was done before the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral epistles existed, just as it is done to-day on the basis of these writings. Nor can we fail to recognize the influence of the Gospels on the interpretation of St Paul. A positive relation to the law, a higher estimation of good works, are likewise discovered in St Paul, and he is imagined as an evangelist of the life of Jesus as well as of His death.

It is impossible to arrive at any fair estimate of the writings of the second strata unless we realize the entire change which had taken place in the thought of the Church, in which all Christians participated alike and which cannot be attributed to any single individual. The authors of the Gospel of St John and the Acts of the Apostles and the rest of these documents must still be allowed a considerable measure of original composition, even if the motives and presuppositions of their writings are to be found in the Christian atmosphere by which they were surrounded. It is only by taking this atmosphere into account that it becomes comprehensible that they dared to do what they did, and that they were met by understanding and approval in all quarters. But then it also becomes evident that their writings cease to be historical documents for Jesus and His gospel, or for St Paul, his character and his theology. They tell us what the growing Catholic Church thought about Jesus and St Paul. Further than that their historical reliability does not go.

The Gospel of St John exceeds all the rest of these writings in importance. The picture which it draws of Jesus had an all-powerful influence upon the Catholic Church, the Reformers, and even Schleiermacher and his successors. Nothing, however, is more opposed to the truth than to isolate it and to ascribe to it a solitary originality to which it makes no claim whatever itself. We have had to mention it in all the chapters of the sub-apostolic age, because it takes so prominent a part in all the struggles and efforts of the Church. It appears to belong to no particular age and to stand above and outside of history, but in spite of this appearance there is scarcely any other writing of the early Christian era which is more a child of its own time and which influences the life of the Church more directly. The author stands like a general on a lofty watch-tower. At his feet he beholds the hosts of the Jews, the Greeks, and in his own Christian camp the Gnostics. He forms a clear conception of the position of each of these, and issues plain decisive commands how each is to be met. He combines the conqueror's enthusiasm with the unrelenting severity of the combatant.

It is to the Greeks that he is evidently the most favourably inclined. For them he gives the watchword of the Logos—in the prologue of the Gospel—which after having sought in vain for reception in the world incarnates itself in the person of Jesus Christ, whence it manifests the glory of God. It is true that he does not follow up this thought any longer. He does not as yet think of proving by the words and life of Jesus that the world's reason here revealed itself. It is not the Logos but the Son of God, Jesus Christ,

who is the subject of his story. But yet he closes the public ministry of Jesus with the prophetic approach of the first Greeks and the Saviour's outlook to the time when He should draw all men to Himself, whilst the prophecy of condemnation upon Israel for the hardening of their hearts should be fulfilled. In other places, too, he keeps the Gentile Church continually in view when he speaks of Jesus as the Saviour of the world, when he places the Gentile Church by the side of the Jewish, and makes the dying Jesus pray for all who shall hereafter come to the faith. His undisguised admiration of Jesus as the God whose mighty wonders everywhere reveal the mystery—God born of God—shows us how entirely he himself can look at things from the standpoint of Greek thought. This favourable disposition towards the Greeks does not, of course, extend to such as profess the religion of Polytheism. It is only for the Gentiles who have become Christians that John wishes to remove a stumbling-block. "Do not," he would say, "be distressed by the fact that Jesus lived in Palestine. He is the Saviour of the world for you, for you quite especially." Nor was it the apostles who first brought the Gospel to the Samaritans—in contradiction, as some might think, to the practice of the Master Himself. It was none other than Jesus who began the mission to the Samaritans. Even before this the conclusions of St Matthew and St Luke were written with a view to enable the Gentile Christians to find comfort in the assurance that Jesus had thought of them definitely. But St John was the first to depict Jesus such as every Gentile Christian was bound to think of Him on the

basis of the Pauline universalism, and such as he pictured to himself even when he read the Synoptic Gospels, filling in their omissions quite as a matter of course. It is quite legitimate to speak here of a higher historical truth, as Jesus was bound by an inner necessity to become the Saviour of the world. But through the deification of Jesus His humanity is thrust on one side and threatens to become a mere phantom, and that is an ominously disturbing element. Even in St Mark the stories of the miracles inserted because of apologetic interests have produced a *bizarre* and fantastical picture. In St John all this is exaggerated beyond recognition. The connection between Jesus and ourselves is severed if Jesus need not die but can take again the life which He lays down. And the relation of Jesus to God is no longer a pattern for us, but rather acts as a deterrent when Jesus thanks God merely because of the multitude which stood around "that they may believe that Thou didst send Me"; and when we further consider what theological controversies and aberrations the testimony here borne to the divinity of Christ has produced in the course of centuries, we shall consider it nothing less than fatal that a Gospel of the New Testament should have been the perpetual cause of this.

The Jews are for St John the foe that is without. It is with them that the Church of his day engaged in a desperate struggle; it is they who are the cause of the greatest suffering. Hence his life of Jesus is almost entirely filled with controversy with the Jews. It even forces its way into the last discourses. And, furthermore, it is the Jews as a

people who are hostile to Christ, not the Pharisees, not the Scribes, but the people as a whole, in so far as they are not believing Jews. The controversy has reached such a pitch of hopeless embitterment that they scarcely take any very great pains any longer to understand each other. From the very first the Jews want to kill Jesus; but Jesus never hopes to win them over, and never seriously endeavours to convince them. Between Jesus and His people there ever stands the hatred between the Jews and Christians of the author's own time. The first meeting in Jerusalem is very significant. As they behold the wonders of Jesus the faith of many Jews is awakened. But Jesus believed them not (did not trust Himself to them), because He knows all men; *i.e.*, in the author's sense, because He knew they were His future murderers. Jesus associates with them in accordance with His knowledge. He purposely speaks to them in enigmatic words which they cannot understand, and which reveal the spiritual chasm between them. Occasionally, too, He proffers proofs of His divine mission; but they are mostly such as already presuppose faith in Him, and thus they are of none effect. Finally, He declares to them to their face that they are neither the children of God nor the children of Abraham but the children of the devil, and that, solely because they do not believe in Him. Moreover, faith is an impossibility for them because of the decree of God. Only those whom the Father draweth to the Son, who are given to the Son, believe. But then this does not apply to the Jews, because the prophecy as to their hardness of heart must be fulfilled. This was the

reason why they could not believe. Besides this, to understand Jesus is impossible for them, because they have not the Spirit, cannot even receive Him. At bottom these three theories—descent from the devil, hardness of heart, want of the Spirit — are but three catchwords uttered in the course of the controversy between Jews and Christians and born of the same hatred. Another such catchword suggests immorality: He that cometh not to Jesus has to conceal his evil works from the light, he is wanting in the will to be good. Now if Jews and Christians are thus opposed to each other without any prospect of mutual understanding and reconciliation, it is clear that Jesus could not pray for the world—it would have been in vain—but only for Christians. The impression which this polemic produces is consistent from beginning to end. The importance which the author attaches to it is shown by the fact that he desired to depict Jesus above all else as the enemy of the Jews.

There is no doubt that he rendered the Church of his time a service by this appreciation. For his contemporaries the struggle with the Jews raged far more violently than the struggle with the heathen state. They read the Gospels, they desired to understand Jesus Himself in the light of this struggle. The entirely different polemic of Jesus against the Scribes and Pharisees justified them—so they imagined—in doing this. They understood the woe upon the hypocritical piety of the Pharisees as a curse upon their unbelief. One need but read in the dogmatic contrast wherever the Synoptists speak of the contrast between the religious relation and morality,

and the Jesus of the Synoptists, too, is an enemy of the Jews. Of course, the many traits of Jesus' pitying, seeking love for His countrymen, the earnest endeavour to secure their conversion, His devotion to them even unto death, which all pointed in another direction, remained standing in the Synoptists. John never thought of removing them; what he wanted above all was to add and to explain, and the fundamental feature in his picture is an addition, his thesis that that which separates Jews from Christians is the belief in Jesus as the Son of God from heaven. But along with this addition, he placed by the side of the picture of heartfelt kindliness, childlikeness, and joy, another picture, in which hatred and implacability stand out against love; and as a true child of his age, he so distorted the human form of Jesus as to make a fanatic of Him, and hence, ever since, made it as easy for human hatred to be kindled at it as divine love. And quite apart from this unbending enmity, how great a loss there is in the way in which Jesus has been turned into a theologian by these endless controversial speeches, with their ambiguity, which purposely provokes misunderstanding, with their proofs and testimonies—above all, with their continual witness to the speaker Himself, upon which there follows in turn an argument as to the utility or inutility of such a witness, and a subtle proof of the value of this witness in particular. This is exactly the way in which Jesus would have spoken had He been a theologian at the end of the first century, and not He who He was in reality: the layman from Galilee who wished to free His disciples from the theologians and to make them children,

children of God, but who was also inspired by a love for His people so deep as to be altogether beyond the comprehensions of these later enemies of the Jews.

The foes within are in John's eyes the heretical Gnostic teachers and their followers. The first epistle is entirely devoted to meet the danger from this quarter, but the Gospel, too, is affected by the consciousness of the same peril. The author, however, shows good taste in not suffering Jesus to speak of them anywhere, and in not drawing the picture of Jesus in an anti-gnostic spirit. He speaks of the incarnation of the Logos quite incidentally and without any polemical purpose, nor does he appear afterwards to be greatly concerned to defend this true human body of Christ against Gnostic docetism. Even in the accurate proofs that he offers of the death of Jesus and His resurrection-body, he is thinking of unbelieving Jews, not of unbelieving Christians. But, on the other hand, the last discourses of Jesus can only rightly be understood when we conceive them to have been written with a view to guide the Church safely through the Gnostic troubles. This supposition does not deprive them of the wonderful power which they exercise, for the position which John occupies in his struggle against the Gnostics could with difficulty be surpassed. Jesus promises His disciples the Spirit of Truth, which is to protect them against the lying spirits who are mentioned in the first letter. Jesus admonishes them to recognize the marks of His discipleship, and the conditions of His fellowship in the keeping of the commandments and the love of

the brethren; thereby He protects them against the selfishness of that mystical love of God of which the Gnostics boasted. Finally, Jesus sums up all His thoughts and wishes in the prayer for the unity of the Church, for the Gnostic desire for separation is the greatest danger which threatens the Church. All this is quite in the spirit of Christ. There can be no doubt of that. We can fancy that Jesus would have spoken thus had He been the founder of a Church, and had the first attempt at schism taken place in His time. Nevertheless, we do well to remember, as Protestants, that we owe our freedom to our having abandoned the Catholic idea of unity contained in the high-priestly prayer. And the love which the Sermon on the Mount demands is far higher than the Christian love of the last discourses. It is not till we come to the First Epistle of St John that we realize the uncompromising character of the contest against the Gnostics. There the Catholics are contrasted with the Gnostics as the children of God by the side of the children of the devil. The counterpart of the great moral contrast is the dogmatic, the confession of Antichrist. The method pursued in the controversy is the same as that employed in the gospel against the Jews. There is no attempt at a compromise, nothing but the most outspoken condemnation. But here too it becomes manifest, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the disciple did not derive these feelings and this language from the Master, but, on the contrary, Jesus had to speak in accordance with John's thoughts. Now, the Gnostics who are St John's opponents are far from being the later celebrated Gnostic schools; they

are the forerunners of the Gnostic movement, such as Cerinthus. How wonderfully, then, did both gospel and epistle meet the needs of the Church which was just being involved more and more deeply in the Gnostic controversy.

As a tract for the times, touching upon every question of the day, and intended to define the position towards Jews, Gnostics, and Greeks, the Gospel of St John was welcome to the Church, and furthered its interests. If one would understand it in connection with all the moving forces of its age, one must forget the picture of the mystic and the philosopher, and call up before one's mind the ecclesiastical champion. Even thus, however, its world-historic importance is but imperfectly accounted for. How could we thus ever understand the fact that it became the most important of the Gospels when the disputes with Jews and Gnostics had long ago died away?

The Fourth Gospel derived this importance, lasting long beyond the time of its birth, from its having bridged over the chasm between Jesus and St Paul, and from its having carried the Pauline Gospel back into the life and teaching of Jesus. It is only through this gospel that Paulinism attains to absolute dominion in the theology of the Church. By Paulinism, however, we do not here mean the Pauline doctrine of justification, or, generally speaking, the apostle's anti-Jewish apologetic. The whole antithetical vocabulary—law, faith; law, grace; law, the Spirit—was abandoned by John as it had been by the whole Church of his day. For the controversy as to the law was now dead and buried, and Christians were

the more ready to forget St Paul's arguments, as they only served to attract reproaches of libertinism and antinomianism. But this anti-Jewish apologetic only forms a very small part of the Pauline theology; it is nothing more than an application of the Pauline soteriology to the controversy regarding the law. The soteriology itself John grasped and expounded so forcibly and clearly, that one is compelled to assume that he had derived lasting impressions from the reading of St Paul's letters. In John's hands the soteriology is lightened of all the ballast of rabbinical conceptions, and is set forth in that grand simplicity which touches the hearts of all men—the simplicity with which Paul the missionary knew how to move his Gentile hearers. Like Paul, he begins with the pessimistic position, the radical corruption of mankind. The world is separated from God, given over to sin and the devil, to darkness and the destiny of death; it is a lost world of sinners. He does, it is true, incidentally endeavour to do justice to the powers that make for goodness outside the Church, when he calls Jesus the light which is bound to draw to itself all good and pure people. But these sentences start from other premises; nothing like them occurs elsewhere, nor can they break their way through the surrounding pessimism: Without me ye can do nothing; that which is born of flesh is flesh. Without the second birth there is no entrance into the kingdom of God. Into this lost world of darkness and of death, light and life enter in the person of Jesus. Far as the author diverges in his prologue from St Paul by spreading this manifestation of light over a whole series of

children of God before Christ, it is not long before he is once more in complete agreement with St Paul in the central importance which he attaches to the one historic fact Jesus Christ, in whose name they, too, all believed whom He made to be children of God in the ages before He came on earth. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, is for John as well as Paul the core and centre of Christianity. And, moreover, John's Christology is Pauline in all its important features—the Son of God who was with God in heaven, and was sent by God upon earth, the Mediator of creation, the God of Revelation of the Old Testament, the Son of Man from heaven, as Paul, too, called Him. And the chief object of His coming into the world is the atonement by means of His death. From its very first line the Gospel centres upon Him, John the Baptist preaches the Lamb of God who is to bear the sins of the world. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to save the world, or, as the first epistle completes the sentence, as a propitiation for our sins. Through His death Jesus has become objectively the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and His blood cleanseth us from all sin. But here too the resurrection is immediately added to the death. Here we have the all-convincing proof that Jesus is the Redeemer, and can give eternal life itself to all who believe in Him. To this, the groundwork of the Pauline Christology, John adds his two modifications. By the side of the death of Jesus he assigns its due place to the life of Jesus, and he fills this life with the positive contents of the divine revelation. The former was the natural

thing for him to do as the writer of a gospel: even without John the life of Jesus would have come to its due rights through the existence of the Synoptic Gospels. Peculiar to him, and at the same time in harmony with St Paul, is the way in which this life of Jesus always points to the death and is filled from beginning to end with instruction as to the value of the death. In the second he endeavours to meet the Greeks, for whom the idea of revelation was of far greater importance than for the Jews, the people of God's revelation from of old. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, He reveals the name of God to men, so His last prayer sums up His work. Hence follows the only important difference between the two Christologies: the picture of Christ in His glory instead of the picture of Jesus in His humiliation. The Jesus who would reveal God unto men and who would prove His Messiahship to the Jews, must manifest all the glory of God and of the Messiah, at any rate at certain definite periods of His activity. But once again John had no need to create this picture of the glorified Christ: he had it in the germ in the proof from miracles contained in the Synoptic Gospels, and needed but to develop it. But one is bound also to add that St John's addition harmonizes very well with Pauline Christology, and that the latter thereby alone acquires its convincing force. In St Paul's writings every psychological mediation is as yet wanting—the Son of God on the cross, the paradox, is to awaken faith by itself. It is John who is the first so to depict the Son of God in His life that we understand that God sent Him, and then having gained this assurance we are not shaken

in our faith even by the death on the cross. And then again, in spite of all Hellenization, in spite of all thoughts of revelation, the fundamental Pauline thought ever and ever again breaks through triumphantly—Jesus the Redeemer. To save the world God sent Him from heaven. He is the Lamb of the world that bears the sins of the world, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, the good Shepherd who dies for His sheep, the resurrection and the life. He is also the Way and the Truth for men who know nothing of God, but He is above all the manifestation of the grace and love of God which lead from death unto everlasting life. The strength and the greatness of the Gospel of St John lie entirely in this description of Jesus the Redeemer, in the realization of the Pauline faith in the picture of the Gospel. The enthusiasm and gratitude of a disciple who found in Jesus life and full satisfaction are for ever breaking through from the midst of hateful controversy and gloomy judgments of condemnation. Even the unrelenting bitterness with which he consigns the Jews to the devil is in his case the necessary converse of his devoted love to Jesus. The subject of his preaching, and of that which he puts into the mouth of Jesus, was at that time by no means something new. Every member of the Church believed that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world. But the manner of his preaching, the wonderful simplicity of his words, the continual return of the same burden, the exclusiveness and entireness of his love for the individual—that is peculiar to him: in this he has never had his equal.

Whoever, like Paul, has conceived of Jesus as the

Redeemer and Reconciler of the world, is also likely to follow Paul in his conception of redemption. For all that Paul teaches of the Spirit of God or of Christ, of faith and the sacraments, of the forgiveness of sins and the certainty of salvation, of predestination, one can find exact parallels in John, only that one feels the difference in the position of the Church, the approach of a new enemy, the Gnostics, in place of the old foe, the Judaizers, which effected a slight change in the point of view. Here, too, salvation comes through the gift of the Spirit, the birth from above. Here is the source of a new moral force—whosoever has the seed of God cannot sin—a new intellectual force, the power to comprehend the earthly and the heavenly, and to explain the secret of Christ and of His death from the sacred book of Revelation, and a new power of God's love, the testimony that God dwells in us, that we are children of God and sure of eternal life. All this is the work of the Spirit of God, who is at the same time the Spirit of Christ. He proceeds from the Father; the Father sends Him, but He sends Him in Christ's name, or the Son Himself sends Him from the Father. He will take of mine, for all that the Father hath is mine. Thus intentionally varying the expression, St John repeats St Paul's view still more clearly, that the divine power which redeems us is Christ's power and bound up with the Person of Jesus, that there are not two redemptions, the one from Christ, the other immediately from God, but the one Redemption in the communion of Christ.

But once again following St Paul, this salvation

by the Spirit is effected by certain means, and they are none other than those which St Paul knows: the Word, faith, the Church, the sacraments. The Word is the chief bond between Christ and Christians; it is the Word of God which Christ does not speak of Himself but of God, and that is why it brings divine power, the Holy Spirit, to men. Jesus' words are Spirit and Life, words of everlasting life, words of cleansing power. John values the sacraments as highly as did the whole Church of his time, but the reason is in his case a higher one. It is the Word that is the channel for the power of salvation, and not the element. On man's side faith is the necessary medium for the reception of the Spirit. In one place John calls it the work of God which God demands of men, but he does this in order to contrast it with the works which the Jews would do in order to obtain salvation. For him, too, faith is in reality no work, no effort of the human will. To believe means to be drawn to Christ, to be ready to receive Him. But just as here again he follows exactly in St Paul's footsteps, so he gives to faith the same ecclesiastical turn: to believe is to confess that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is the Son of God in the flesh. And in the battle which the Church wages, it all depends upon this. John speaks of this faith with the enthusiasm of St Paul and of the author of the Acts. Everlasting happiness and all other benefits of the communion with God depend upon this faith alone. In his first letter, where he writes as a simple Christian to Christians, he assigns the first place to the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. Like St Paul, St John tells us that they can be

obtained by looking at God's love on the cross, and in the confident hope that Jesus is our advocate with God. Hence the name Paraclete, and hence the twofold application of this name to the Son and to the Spirit, for both are our representatives and our advocates with God. In the Gospel, where as an apologist he would win for Christ not only sinners but more especially the doers of God's will, those that walk in the light, he sets forth the knowledge of God and everlasting life as the privilege of believers. He that believes has everlasting life; that is St John's translation of St Paul's preaching: he that believes will be saved. By everlasting life he by no means signifies a merely inward possession, as modern theologians commonly speak of present immortality. It is the life which lasts beyond death, the beginning of the risen life, upon which the resurrection of the body is bound to follow by an inner necessity. Like St Paul, St John knows of a double resurrection, the first at baptism and the other at the second coming, and the latter completes the former. So, too, he knows of an anticipation of the judgment of the world in this present life. And yet the future judgment remains as awful an event as ever. This judgment is accomplished in the advent of the Redeemer and in the division of men into such as suffer themselves to be redeemed and such as are lost. Here we have an exact parallel to St Paul's doctrine of justification. Paul writes: "He that believes is justified, and is saved from the wrath that is to come." John writes: "He that believes cometh not into condemnation, but hath everlasting life." That is surely merely a difference of expression. As soon

as the question is put, How must Jesus have spoken in the sense of St Paul? the answer can only be, exactly as He speaks in St John.

St John agrees also with St Paul in never mentioning the Church in connection with his doctrine of salvation. He speaks of salvation as though each individual received it afresh and immediately at the hand of Jesus Christ. And yet he himself wished by no means to be understood in a mystical but in an ecclesiastical sense. The emphasis laid upon the Word is sufficient in itself to decide the point. Faith is kindled by the Word, but the Word does not come straight down from heaven, but through the preachers of the Church and the communion of the Church. We may draw the same conclusion, too, from the importance attached to the sacraments of the Church, with which salvation always appears to be very closely connected. But it is contained still more directly in the demand for faith; faith is the sign of the Christian Church. In St John's time there are no believers outside the Church: "Extra Christum nulla salus" means and is intended to mean "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus." The necessity for ecclesiastical communion is set forth by St John in the parable of the true vine so clearly that none of his readers could mistake his meaning. It is merely due to his feeling of fitness that he does not use the word Church when speaking of a time when it did not as yet exist. The parable of the vine and the branches has the same meaning as the Pauline parable of the head and the members, viz., that the Church has in Christ its centre of life, that each single individual derives all his strength by

remaining in vital contact with this centre. It reminds us still more plainly, however, of the prayer in the Jewish communion, which is preserved for us in the Didache: "We thank thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy servant." The vine was for the Jews, just like the one loaf, a symbol of the Jewish Church, now scattered throughout the world but destined to be made one in the kingdom of God. Now, just as the Jews are branches of the vine of David, so are the Christians of the true Vine of Christ. When John therefore urges the importance, the necessity, of remaining in the vine, he is really calling upon the disciples to remain true to the word of Christ and to the communion of the Church, in contrast with the indifferent, nominal Christians and the Gnostic separatists. Hence Jesus' last words to His disciples are the oft-repeated fervent prayer for the unity of the Church. In any case, what St John wishes is not to give individual pious souls instructions for mystic communion with God on high, but to keep the Church in a living connection with its head and founder. It was this alone that his age asked of him.

The mysticism which is clearly to be traced in the Gospel of St John is that of the sacraments. It is now referred to Jesus Himself. Even in Jesus' lifetime, says the Fourth Gospel, men were baptized in His name, though Jesus Himself did not baptize. Without this baptism there is no new birth, no entrance into the kingdom of God. But the one baptism is to be sufficient. Jesus refuses to allow any repetition of the rite. And in the same way He is made to declare there can be no

everlasting life without participation in the Lord's Supper. The Father is eternal life, the Son lives through the Father, the Christian lives through the Son when he eateth Him at the Lord's Supper. This is, of course, not to be understood in a material sense; it is a question of spiritual food and spiritual drink, as St Paul calls it. Thus John adopted all Paul's thoughts as to the means of salvation.

The Pauline soteriology is completed by the belief in predestination. St John makes Jesus proclaim this belief aloud to all men. He alone cometh to the faith whom the Father draweth to the Son and giveth to the Son. "It is not ye that have chosen Me; it is I who have chosen you," says Jesus to the disciples, and so furnishes the predestinarian interpretation to the choice of the twelve in the Synoptic Gospels. But he that is chosen is absolutely certain of salvation. "Nobody can tear him from My hand, from My Father's hand. Who can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ?" Here, however, a difficult problem arises owing to the changed position of affairs. For St Paul all believers were chosen, and the Church was the fellowship of the chosen saints. Could John maintain this now that so many Christians were notoriously evil livers, and now that the Gnostic heresy had led so many believers astray? It is very significant that the character of the traitor Judas came to be of importance to him for the solution of this difficult question. Judas is one of the twelve whom Jesus called; he believes in Him, follows Him to the end, takes part in the Last Supper. And yet he is a devil. Jesus never chose him, but knew from the beginning the

sad end to which he would come. On several other occasions too John points out that Jews believed in Jesus—even in His name—whose faith was worthless, who were themselves the children of the devil. And then immediately afterwards he once more declares: "He that believeth hath everlasting life; no man can tear My sheep from My hand." St John does not give us a homogeneous and clear solution of the problem. He does not appear to have found one as yet. He gives us the answer of the later Catholic Church: It depends upon whether you remain constant in the truth that you have once accepted, and whether the fruits of your life prove the reality of your faith. According to this it is a man's relation to God, and not the divine decree, that decides. But he gives us as well the answer of all predestinarians: Judas was not chosen, and therefore he must needs be lost. In any case he has abandoned his confidence in the belief that the Church is the fellowship of the elect; and all those sentences which connect faith and everlasting life together, apparently without laying down any conditions, must be understood as limited by the declarations on this subject in the last discourses. But here again he was anticipated by St Paul, who urged those that stood without to believe, while those that were within were bidden to show forth love and to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Now just as John here starts from St Paul's doctrine of predestination and modifies it from the point of view of his own age and its requirements, so in other subjects too he occasionally adapts his Pauline basis to other thoughts and formulizations.

The masses had to be taught the faith of the Church, the heretics and their conception of Christianity had to be controverted: both these requirements imperatively demanded consideration. Hence the Johannine soteriology is far less enthusiastic than the Pauline. The author of the first epistle is very reticent as to the Spirit. In the Gospel, too, the Spirit is the teacher of truth, the guarantee of ecclesiastical orthodoxy. This can scarcely be the author's whole meaning, but it is this that appears to him to be of especial importance just at present. On the other hand, he speaks of the commandments far more frequently and with far greater ardour than St Paul. He is thinking of the Sermon on the Mount, and, generally speaking, of the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptists. They are not simply the result of the Spirit's agency. They have to be learnt and kept as authoritative. This is not opposed to St Paul's teaching, for on one occasion he too designated the keeping of the commandments as the chiefest object in a Christian's life, and yet it is altogether unlike his usual method. It would be a marvel if St John did not differ from St Paul in this point. And yet how nearly he approaches to him when he calls the keeping of the commandments the fruit of the fellowship with Christ. In St John we never really quit the great apostle's mighty sphere of thought.

The whole of the Johannine theology is a natural development from the Pauline. It is Paulinism modified to meet the needs of the sub-apostolic age. Two important consequences follow from this.

There is no Johannine theology by the side of and independent of the Pauline. Luther already felt

this clearly, and he understood something of the matter. John and Paul are not two theological factors, but one. Were we to accept that St John formed his conception of Christianity either originally or directly from Jesus' teaching, we should have to refuse St Paul all originality, for we should leave him scarcely a single independent thought. But it is St Paul that is original; St John is not. In St Paul's letters we look, as through a window, into the factory where these great thoughts flash forth and are developed; in St John we see the beginning of their transformation and decay. Somebody must surely have first created the theory of the Spirit independently before his successor could break off the point of it by his theory of the Logos. There must first have been a preaching of the cross, and the cross alone, before a life of Jesus was written which pointed to this cross from the very first. And this reasoning applies to all the rest.

The question which now arises as to who this John was to whom the tradition (first to be traced in Irenæus) ascribes these writings is, from a theological point of view, entirely valueless, and can only interest the antiquarian investigators of tradition. Ignatius, the only writer of the beginning of the second century who was well acquainted with Asia Minor, and of whom genuine writings have come down to us, only knows of the intercourse of the apostle Paul with the congregations of Asia Minor, although he has himself read the Johannine writings. It must, however, be admitted that this search for an apostolic author is occasioned by the Gospel itself, which claims to be written by a favourite

disciple who stood even nearer to Jesus than Peter, the chief authority in the Synoptists. It is only through him that Peter learns who the traitor is, and gets into the high priest's court. He reaches the empty grave before Peter, and before Peter he recognizes the risen Lord. While Peter denies his Master, he remains faithful and stands beneath the cross and receives the dying Saviour's last testament. And this is the most calamitous, the most painful point in the whole writing, which only hereby obtains something of the character of a mystification. For none of these 'witnesses' has the slightest historical probability. One must have a considerable dose of credulousness to believe the witness of the favourite disciple and the mother of Jesus under the cross, and the many touching farewell words in contradiction to the Synoptic report of the flight of all the disciples, of the Marys and Salome looking on from afar, and of Jesus' single cry of anguish. The only fact that can be called historical is the attempt on the part of a number of the teachers of the Church—the 'we'—to obtain acceptation for the new account which differed from the Synoptic in so many particulars. We cannot tell how they reconciled their action with their conscience. One thing is certain—they succeeded completely in their attempt.

The significance of the Fourth Gospel consists in the fact that it refers the teaching of St Paul back to Jesus Himself. This constitutes its value and its worthlessness, its force and its fatality. It is Jesus Himself who now tells us that everyone is lost without Him, that He is the only Redeemer and Reconciler for all nations and men, that faith in Him

alone brings us the knowledge of God and communion with God, forgiveness of sins, confidence in prayer, and certainty of everlasting life. But at the same time it is Jesus Himself who now tells us that the Church is the channel of this salvation, that without the Church there is no salvation, neither for Jews nor Greeks, that the Christian orthodox Church is the only road to blessedness. This is set forth with such simplicity and clearness that the simplest intelligence can grasp it, and with such glowing enthusiasm that even opponents are carried away by it. At the same time John now tells us that the Synoptic Gospels —to which his own is now added as a supplement— are to be interpreted in St Paul's sense, and only in that sense. And thereby he covers up and conceals Jesus beneath St Paul and the Church. He makes the understanding of Jesus—the Jesus of history before the Church existed—impossible for ever. It is no longer a question of the kingdom of God or of hell, of the doing of God's will in strict self-discipline, of childlike love and childlike trust in God, but of faith and the confession of Jesus as the Son of God. The contrast, which is henceforth to move the world, and only too frequently with terrible results, is no longer between good and bad, but between believing and unbelieving. This transposition cannot be laid to the charge of any single individual, not to St John, not even to St Paul. It was inevitable as soon as the Christian community separated from the national Jewish Church and limited the claim to eternal life to those who shared the faith in Jesus. And the drawing together of this community, the foundation of the Church, followed from the feelings of gratitude and

enthusiasm of the disciples for all that they had received from Jesus, and was the necessary instrument in order to maintain the divine power of Jesus and to carry it forth into the world. We are everywhere met by necessary limitations to all the blessings and the benefits which we enjoy to this day. And yet this exclusiveness of the disciples was a Jewish inheritance, and not after the mind of Jesus. In any case, far from being a necessity, it was a downright misfortune that Jesus Himself was made to be the author of exclusiveness and fanaticism of faith as John depicted Him. For thereby that which is of real importance in the sight of God has been obscured, and Jesus' own redemptive power has been impaired by the very men who were the most powerful preachers of the Saviour Christ.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH THEOLOGY.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER XII.

The Fate of Paul.

Of the other writings of the second strata of the New Testament, none approaches even from afar to the importance of the Fourth Gospel, which it would not be too much to say has influenced the world's history by its Pauline transformation of the picture of Jesus. But yet it is significant, too, how the Apostle Paul and the twelve are adapted in these later writings to the Catholicism of the turn of the century. In St Paul's case the Acts and the Pastoral epistles which are based upon it have to be considered.

In these writings Paul appears as the great missionary to the heathen, the opponent of the Jews, the ecclesiastical organizer. The Paul of history was all this most decidedly—only after a somewhat different fashion, and he was something else besides. The first point which is everywhere emphasized is that Paul became a Christian from being a persecutor of the Christians, and right from the midst of this

persecution. Three times the story of his conversion is repeated in the Acts. It was a striking example for this later generation how God can turn the heart even of an enemy of the faith. Thus, then, it serves the Church as one of the most impressive stories of a conversion, but not as that which it really was to St Paul—the genesis of his gospel and his apostleship. It is indeed remarkable how completely the impression of his independence has been lost, and how marked the tendency is, on the contrary, to attach the convert firmly to the old tradition. Ananias, a pious Jewish Christian in Damascus, baptizes him and introduces him to the Christians in that town. Being not long after expelled thence, he comes to Jerusalem, where Barnabas brings him to the apostles and he associates with them. The work of Ananias appears so important to the author that he twice gives us a detailed account of it. Nothing is omitted that could serve to establish an unbroken chain of apostolic tradition. As Luke in all probability read the Epistle to the Galatians containing St Paul's own account, one can here see how the Epistles of St Paul were read—in a devotional and ecclesiastical spirit, as was only right and fair, about in the same way as they were read up to the days of the great F. C. Baur of Tübingen. But it is instructive to notice that our authors go still further in their friendly disposition towards the old tradition, for they evidently delight in assigning great prominence to the strong Jewish tradition in St Paul. In the judgment of the Acts, St Paul was not to be blamed but rather congratulated on having been a pious Pharisee from his youth up. Does he not notice

in the case of Ananias himself how, judged by Jewish conceptions, he had been a devout observer of the law? The Pharisees are the men of hope; even as a Christian St Paul feels himself related to them. What else is Christianity but Judaism with its hopes fulfilled? The Christian is the true pious Jew, and therefore, as a Pharisee, Paul was on the surest road that led to Christianity. He only lacked the knowledge that in Jesus the Messiah had already come. And therefore he can say that he has served God from his forefathers in a pure conscience, as though no breach in his religious relation had ever taken place; and therefore he can praise Timothy for having been educated by his grandmother and mother in the true Jewish piety that was based upon the Scriptures. The revolutionary has been here transformed into the regular conservative. This is quite in accordance with Catholic modes of thought. For Catholicism can endure no revolution. All the dangerous elements in St Paul have been suppressed.

The picture that is drawn of St Paul is altogether based upon this conception. Everything great and original, the apostleship that is of revelation, the new gospel of Christian liberty, the conflict with the twelve, the great controversy with the judaizers, has completely disappeared or has been smoothed away past recognition. Peter, not Paul, is the first missionary to the Gentiles; Paul does not go to heathen lands till he and Barnabas are sent by the congregation of Antioch. Even now he will not go to the Gentiles in the first instance, and it is only the opposition of the Jews that drives him to it.

Then a division of opinion certainly does arise over the question of the circumcision of the Gentile Christians. The recollection of this was evidently too firmly imprinted in men's minds for our author to omit all mention of it. But the only use he makes of it is, first, to afford Peter and James an opportunity for the proclamation of the universal scope of the Gospel on the basis of the faith that alone confers blessing, while Paul gives an account of his missionary journeys and takes no part in the debate; and next to refer the origin of the so-called decree of the apostles to a solemn moment in the history of the Church. Again, one asks oneself in amazement, can this man have read the Epistle to the Galatians, seeing that he thus transforms the great controversialist and champion of liberty into a harmless participant in the missionary meeting at Jerusalem? And yet this letter was read by the Church in later ages as well, and with the solitary exception of Marcion, no one noticed anything. Naturally, then, the unedifying quarrel with Peter at Antioch, and the great Jewish counter-mission, together with Paul's opposition to it, were passed over altogether; why should we preserve these unpleasant pages in history? Every edifying method of treating history understands the art of silence in such cases.

The picture which the book of the Acts draws of St Paul is even thus a mighty one. Something of the magic charm of the first Christian mission, with all its new outlook, its surprises, its obstacles and victorious progress, accompanies all the journeys of the apostle. Rich, invaluable material here lay to hand in the so-called "we-source," the travel-journal

of a companion. From this we learn, amongst other things, that St Paul did really first turn to the Jews in order to get access to the Gentiles. Here our author found a foundation for his theory that it was in every case and always the unbelief of the Jews that was the occasion of the mission to the heathen, and that as a matter of fact it was against their will that the missionaries were led by God to take up their new task. It was an apologetic theory, formed to meet the Jewish reproach of the frivolous abandonment of the religion of their fathers, while at the same time it satisfied the Catholic consciousness which furthered the retention of the old tradition as long as possible. There are other instances, too, where valuable pieces of information appear in a special light, owing to the author's special method of selection. The circumcision of Timothy, the vow in Corinth and afterwards in Jerusalem, are not necessarily inventions, but the mention of them spoils the picture of the apostle, if all features of complete emancipation from the law are omitted. But what is one to say to the theology which is ascribed to St Paul in the speeches to the Gentiles and in his controversies with the Jews? Here we see the change produced by the ecclesiastical position in the case of a man who sincerely meant to be a disciple of St Paul. He has, of course, grasped St Paul's fundamental thought that Jesus was the Saviour of the world, and that faith in Him carries with it the promise of eternal life. As far as this foundation is concerned, he is a true follower of the apostle. But in the arguments that he produces to convince the Jews he differs altogether from St

Paul. It is no longer the question of the law, the proof of the impossibility of the fulfilment of the law, the arousing of the feeling of despair that leads to faith in Jesus as the Redeemer, but the Jewish theology of the Messiah, the proof of the fulfilment of the prophecies in Christ. The only subject of controversy between St Paul and the Jews is whether Jesus is the Messiah according to the Scriptures, and whether the Messiah had to die and rise again. This is exactly the way in which John tries to arouse faith in Jesus. And hereby, surely, the Pauline preaching is deprived of all its deep dramatic and personal elements, and is clothed instead in the dress of an altogether trivial scholastic theology. And this comes about without any special fault on the part of the author himself. It is simply due to the entire change in the position of affairs: the dogmatic controversy with the Jews now occupies the foreground. It is only like a faint recollection of old times that we occasionally hear that St Paul was really persecuted by the Jews because of his abandonment of the law.

The account that is given us of the oldest form of Christian life in the Pauline congregations is exceedingly scanty. There is no trace, for instance, of any attempt to draw upon the rich treasures of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Nor should we ever have imagined, had we possessed the Acts alone, that such a thing as the enthusiasm of the early Christians ever existed in the Pauline congregations. The more significant, therefore, is the selection of the few details which the author does impart to us: the appointment of the elders, the

last instructions to the deputation from Miletus with the warning against the false teachers. But it is just these few details of ecclesiastical organization which the book of the Acts presents that form the connecting link with the Pastoral epistles which present us with a Paul who does nothing but regulate the constitution of the Church and combat the false teachers. The Paul of the Acts and not of the Epistles is the starting-point here, in spite of the little difference that the bishops now claim that reward for their labours which the speech at Miletus had bidden them forego. Nor is it very edifying to see the great destroyer of Jewish ecclesiasticism and the creator of free communities subject to nothing but the Spirit, here exalted as the first example of the clever ecclesiastic.

The theology of the Pastoral epistles is built upon the foundation of the Pauline soteriology, but goes further in a Catholic direction than St John. Faith in Jesus comes, as ever, first and foremost; it accepts the free grace of God which came down to us in the expiatory death of Jesus. But then love, righteousness, patience, and, generally speaking, good works, must at once be added to faith, if we are to attain to the right kind of piety. There is no mention of the Spirit in this connection except—and this is significant—when speaking of baptism. Otherwise the Spirit is confined to the officials. John would surely scarcely have written this. And in like manner predestination is much more clearly abandoned than in St John. It depends upon a man's own self whether he become a vessel to honour or dishonour, whether he purge himself or

not. The Church is the great house full of saints and sinners. Here, too, we have a sign that the age of early enthusiasm is past.

But in spite of all this it is a practical, an excellent conception of Christianity, one which would by no means discredit even St Paul himself. The author knows exactly what the Church of his age needs above all else in order to be steered safely through all perils and dangers. But as he would have had too little authority had he written merely in his own name, he assumes the authority of the aged apostle. Some few short notes of St Paul to his younger missionary associates may very likely have been known to him, and may have helped him to clothe his thoughts in a skilful dress, but at the very beginning of the Second Epistle to Timothy he has abandoned his rôle, and the greater part of these letters is, after all, his own addition.

The transformation of St Paul into a Catholic ecclesiastic in the Acts and the Pastoral epistles was far from being attended by the important consequences which resulted from the exaltation of St John over the Synoptic Gospels. A man who served the Church with such devotion as St Paul had done, cannot object if she added some touches to the original picture in order to adapt it for her use in later times. And yet the world was thus deprived of some of the best and greatest elements in the apostle's character. It could no longer look back upon the picture of a man who trusted in God and conscience alone, and thence derived the gigantic strength to overthrow traditions and authorities invested with the sanctity of centuries.

And now the ecclesiastical teachers had only one task left at the end of the first century: that was to fill up the gap between Jesus and St Paul, to give a picture of the apostles which should fit that of the Paulinized Jesus and the Catholicized St Paul. The first part of the Acts and the "Catholic Epistles" complete this task. It was rendered exceedingly easy by the fact that no older written historical documents (composed in a different spirit) existed in the case of the twelve apostles as they did in the case of Jesus and St Paul, but, at most, all manner of oral traditions, which had no other object than that of glorification. For the belief was already firmly established that all that the Church possessed, both in matters of doctrine and of organization, came down from the apostles, and through them from Jesus. It is on the basis of this faith that the author of the Acts composes his book, but at the same time he describes the lives of the apostles from a point of view which was entirely foreign to them—that of a gradual transition of the gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles. First of all the risen Lord gives the plan of the mission: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Then the feast of Pentecost brings us the first anticipated realization of the furthest aims of the missionaries, when the representatives of all nations listen to the preaching of Peter concerning Jesus the Messiah.

At first, however, the scene of their missionary activity is confined to Jerusalem, until the increasing severity of the persecutions of the Jews culminates in the first martyrdom and causes the

majority of the Christians, not the apostles, to take to flight. Now the way is open for the extension that was anticipated in the plan of the missions prefixed to the book. In a nicely-ordered succession, the conversion of the Samaritans—that is to say, the half Jews—is followed by that of the proselyte from Ethiopia, still an adherent of the Jewish religion, and next by that of the first Gentile, whose alms and prayers, however, approach him very nearly to the Jews; then comes the foundation of the first Gentile Christian Church at Antioch, and finally the great mission to the Gentiles. The history of the earliest Christian missions could not have taken place in accordance with a better-ordered programme; this is the more wonderful, as it was no carefully premeditated plan on the part of the leaders which led them along this road, but simply the force of historical circumstances. In such a gradual development of the mission to the Gentiles there was no room for any really serious conflicts to arise, and this is the point that appears to our author to be of the greatest importance. The conversion of the first Gentile is sanctioned by such a mass of divine revelations that the only result of resistance to it is to manifest this divine sanction still more clearly. But no reader can fail to derive the impression that had not the great Paul possessed the courage, the fearlessness of consequences, and the pertinacity of the revolutionary, his little conservative successors and disciples would still all be sitting to-day on the benches of the synagogue,

The author of the Acts, of course, filled up this

outline of the progress of Christian missions—as he imagined them to have taken place—with a varied series of pictures from the missionary life. A large amount of space is assigned to the speeches. They all reflect the author's theology, and after all, this is their best feature—that every trace of artificial archaism is wanting in them. We do not get the old genuine Paulinism with its antithetical abruptness in this portion of the book either. Only St Paul's main thought, that belief in Jesus the Redeemer is the sole source of salvation, is the foundation of every speech. As a rule the stumbling-block of the death of Jesus stands in the foreground; it is removed by the testimony of the resurrection and by the proof that both the death and the resurrection of the Messiah had been prophesied in the Old Testament. Next, the author is very fond of dwelling upon the history of the Old Testament as a whole, and of interpreting it from a Christian standpoint as a preparation for the history of Christ, thereby depriving the Jews of the possession of it and handing it over to the Christians. It is the first martyr, the man condemned for his apostasy, who at his trial gives the Jews the most detailed account of the history of the patriarchs and of Moses, with which they had been perfectly familiar from their childhood. The object is to convince the reader of St Stephen's conservative attitude and of his strict faith in the Scriptures. From all this we can learn a great deal as to the Catholic theology in this the earliest period of its growth, but nothing at all as to the views of the earliest Christians.

The glorification, however, and canonization of the

apostles by the Church, which is undertaken in these same first chapters of the Acts, came to be of great importance to all later times. In the gospels, especially in St Mark's, the oldest, the apostles fare badly enough: their most striking characteristic is their shortsightedness and obtuseness, their inability to understand Jesus. Jesus is represented in St Mark as great and mysterious really at the cost of the apostles. Here St Matthew and St Luke have already considerably toned down the picture in their editions. But now, in the Acts, St Luke bids us only look at the bright side. It is upon the apostles first and foremost that the Holy Ghost descended. Since then they are no longer men like ourselves, but God's voices. What they speak is God's word, and what they order God's commandment. And this applies just to the twelve, for it was immediately before Whit Sunday that they again attained to their full number. Thus constituted they are the highest authority in the Church next to Jesus. As such they institute the seven, they superintend the new mission to the Samaritans, and pronounce the great decision as to the question of the law in the council of the apostles at Jerusalem. Now, it is instructive to notice that these three instances of the exercise of their official power by the whole body of the apostles are historically untrustworthy. We have St Paul's contradictory report as to the council at Jerusalem. In the account given of St Philip in the eighth chapter every reader can feel that the original tradition celebrated Philip as the apostle to the Samaritans, and that only a later hand added the apostolic

sanction with the artificial distinction that Philip indeed could baptize, but only an apostle could impart the Holy Spirit. In the account of the choice of the seven, we have a similar adaptation of the Hellenistic tradition with the object of exalting the apostles. Hence we learn that the author of the Acts applies his idea of the authority and significance of the apostolic body to traditions which knew nothing whatever about it.

But apart from this, the whole conception of the increased power and perfection of the apostles since the day of Pentecost contradicts all that we know of the actual conduct of the apostles. As a matter of fact they were men filled with an intense love for Jesus and possessed of the courage of martyrs, but they were also exceedingly shortsighted in the face of every divinely ordained change in the position of affairs. They greatly increased St Paul's difficulties through their want of clearness and decision, through their unyielding passive resistance to his progressive tendencies. Pray, where was the Holy Ghost in St Peter when he played the hypocrite with the Jewish Christians at Antioch? Surely we have here an altogether untrue picture as the result of the bright colours which have been laid on in the ecclesiastical and devotional interests. Nowhere does our author present us with any really valuable historical information regarding the acts of these twelve apostles, which is sufficient proof that we are here concerned rather with dogma than with historical recollections.

In like manner the meagre description of the life

of the congregation, based as it is upon very scanty information, transfers the author's ideals to the old time. One such ideal is the pious frequentation of the Temple by the first Christians; he may have a subsidiary object—to stop the calumnies of the Jews, but he would scarcely emphasize the point as he does, if he did not himself find the practice edifying. The "being in the house of God" is for him too a part of true Christian piety. Another of his ideals is the community of property, which, without further ado, he asserts to have prevailed generally in the earliest age, although the old documents from which he derived his knowledge of this subject contradict him in this point. He was here carried along by a current of his age with which we are already familiar in Hermas and the pseudo-Clementines, and which may also have been met with in certain social strata outside of the Church.

And thus he sheds a golden light upon the first age of the saints, which is to be a bright example to all later generations while they realize the distance that separates the present from this glorious past. Such a description, the product of faith and enthusiasm, can be justified even if its historical value is very small. But it is fortunate for us that in the Synoptical traditions and in the epistles of St Paul we can recognize the features of another picture which is less ideal, less harmonious, but on the other hand infinitely fresher and more vigorous, fuller of contradictions—in one word, more natural.

When once the original apostles were acknowledged as the highest authority for the Gentile Churches, it was very natural that the wish should

arise to receive letters from them addressed to the Gentile Christian congregations. The origin of the First Epistle of St Peter has not yet been explained; only one thing is clear: we have here an altogether Pauline letter which nowhere claims to have been written by St Peter and which yet bears St Peter's name at the commencement. It is no specially theological writing; its object is to encourage the Christians of Asia Minor in the State persecutions which are now beginning, and to urge them to retain a firm hold on the Christian ideal of life. But it is just this, its practical tendency, which makes it a valuable document for the simple lay theology at the end of the first century. It is a conception of Christianity such as Clement of Rome presupposes in his letter. But familiarity with St Paul's epistles has here brought about an even closer adherence to Pauline diction. Christ, grace, faith — these are the foundations of Christianity. The threefold formula even appears: chosen by God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, reconciled by Christ. The struggle against Jewish legalism is altogether past and yet Paul's main dogma still remains, that redemption is through God's grace alone. And in the sacrificial death of Jesus this grace has become visible and tangible for us; whilst Jesus' resurrection gives wings to our hope. This grace of God then draws near to lost man in the word of the Gospel, which awakens faith, and in baptism brings about regeneration. On this foundation the Christian is to continue building in obedience, patience, hope and love until he attains to the promise. Now, it is not difficult to discover many points in which the author

of the First Epistle of St Peter diverges from St Paul and betrays a tendency to interpret his epistles in a Catholic sense. St Paul is for him only one source of his piety and his thoughts. Another equally important source is the scriptural piety of the Jews of the dispersion. It is especially in the far less important place assigned to the Spirit and to the decay of enthusiasm that one recognizes the divergence between the two ages. And yet, in spite of all, we have here a Christianity that is altogether dominated by St Paul. When Luther reckoned the First Epistle of St Peter by the side of St John and the Epistles of St Paul as belonging to the core and centre of all the Scriptures, then he showed an entire appreciation of the facts of the case. Starting from St Paul, the epistle is altogether intelligible; starting from Jesus, this is by no means the case. And hence we are also exempted from the necessity of all further inquiry as to the apostolic author.

The writings of the end of the first century lead us everywhere to the same result. The theology of the New Testament is Catholicized Paulinism. Paul is everywhere the starting-point. It is his gospel that now speaks to us out of the words of Jesus and the original apostles. As he drove the Judaists out of the Gentile Church so he has impressed upon it the stamp of his spirit for all time. By the side of his all-powerful influence none other could have existed. But his victory was very considerably furthered by the eminently ecclesiastical character of his theology with its motto, "Extra Christum, extra ecclesiam, nulla salus," shining in large letters above it. To this day it remains an impressive sight for us,

how the great weighty thoughts of this one man force their way through in the whole of the great Gentile Church. And yet it is not the entire, the original, the genuine Paul who gained the victory, not Paul in all his unconfined freedom. Even upon Paul tradition laid its mighty hand as it worked on in silence and anonymity. Much that was of the highest importance to him personally was laid aside and forgotten, because it no longer suited the needs of another age; so, for instance, almost the entire anti-Jewish theology with its antithesis—the law or Christ. Other things, such as the great enthusiasm, the theology of the Spirit, fell into disrepute because the Gnostics took possession of them, and they were finally confined within the narrow limits of the sacraments and ecclesiastical offices. Their place is taken by new factors, such as the ecclesiastical constitution, the orthodox faith, which now acquire importance; or an emphasis is laid upon freedom, the commandments, and good works, which was foreign to St Paul himself. Finally, his picture is so entirely painted over and hidden away by the Acts and the Pastoral epistles that the Church of the following centuries knows the genuine Paul as little as it knows the genuine Jesus.

One and the same process has operated in the New as well as the Old Testament. Both books contain that which is most original, the greatest and the deepest moments in the course of the long history of God's dealings with men: there we have the great prophets from Amos to Jeremiah; here the Jesus of the Synoptic tradition, and the Paul of the genuine epistles. But in both instances these everlasting

treasures are combined and bound up with the writings of men of a very different stamp, very ordinary men, often enough entirely abandoned by the prophetic spirit, and thereby their influence has been impaired. The significance of the New Testament consists essentially in this, that it alone hands down to us the words of Jesus and His apostle—for whence else could we obtain them?—and at the same time obscures them for all times and so still for us. It was the greatest event in the past history of Christianity when Luther from his own experience once more discovered the true Paul, and thereby liberated one-half of Christianity from the prison-house of Catholic tradition. Since then free Protestant science has been engaged in the work of rediscovering the true Jesus, and thus far things are as they were of old, thanks above all to the dominion exercised by the New Testament, the inheritance of the infant Catholic Church.

PERSONAL RELIGION IN THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Christian Hope.

One is always glad to turn aside from the theology of this period to the personal religion of the age, for here we can trace the personal influence of Jesus. Never has the theology of any age been identical with its Christianity. Never has it been anything else than an attempt at harmonizing the Gospel with the spiritual force of each age. St Paul was a true disciple of Jesus in his conception of personal religion, of that which we call the life with God. It was only in his apologetics, in his proof of the way, the one sole way, which leads to this piety, that he did not keep close to his Master, but fashioned a theology of his own in his controversy with the Jews, which he then took to be the Gospel itself. So it was again in the course of the second century. Theological systems were often put forward so prominently that one was tempted to mistake them for the Christianity of that age. We can assure ourselves of our mistake if we trace the power of the Gospel on the lives of men even in this age of the growth of Catholicism.

It is not the eschatology of the Catholic Church which we here intend to portray, how the spiritualism of St Paul, Jewish apocalyptic writings, Greek fancies as to Hades, Gnostic longing for heaven, were successively added to Jesus' preaching of the kingdom, and how out of this chaos of opinions regarding the future there gradually arose a firmly established eschatological dogma of the Church. All with which we have to do here is the influence of this hope on the emotions and imaginations, and consequently upon the practical life. Though the conceptions are entirely different, the hope remains the same in its intensity and fervour, and conversely we may trace the identical eschatological dogma with varying degrees of zeal and enthusiasm. And besides this, however much the eschatologies may differ, they all agree in one principal point. Unlike the modern idea of the kingdom of God, they never take the future history of this earth into account. Even the millenary theory clings to the old opinion that the kingdom of God on earth will be brought about by wonders and catastrophes. No Christian, no Gnostic even, ever built up his hopes on anything but a supernatural basis.

Had the promises, however, which Jesus had made in the first instance, and St Paul had confirmed, been fulfilled? Jesus had promised certain of His disciples that they should not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. In like manner His contemporaries, especially His judges, were to witness His second coming.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed"; and to the Romans,

"Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand." Not one of these promises was fulfilled.

It is true that the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem confirmed one of Jesus' prophetic words. But the second coming did not, as was expected, follow immediately thereupon. All the evangelists, from the first to the last, try in their narratives to meet the difficulties occasioned by the disappointment, *i.e.*, the postponement of the coming of Jesus. In the old apocalyptic pamphlet, dating from the sixties, which Mark has inserted in his eschatological discourses, there stood originally, in all probability, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days cometh the Son of man"; but Mark omitted the word "immediately." Following the prevailing mood of his day Luke reports a sad utterance of the Lord. "The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it." Jesus had spoken of the unexpected coming of the Master by night. Luke describes the impatience of his age, if He shall come only in the second watch or even only in the third. He revises Mark's eschatological discourse so that the date of the second coming is postponed. "These things must needs come to pass first, but the end is not immediately." Between the destruction of Jesusalem and the Parousia he inserts the seasons of the Gentiles.

In answer to the question, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" St Luke makes even the risen Lord to give an evasive answer, and when Jesus ascends to heaven shortly afterwards the angels

do not, according to St Luke, say to the disciples: "You shall see Him come again in like manner as you saw Him ascend," but only "He shall so come again in like manner as ye beheld Him." This conclusion of the life of Jesus in St Luke cannot fail to remind us of that in St Matthew, which is composed in an exactly similar spirit: "So I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In fact the first evangelist expresses the delay of the great event no less forcibly than the third in the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. The bridegroom defers his coming. Some of the virgins fall asleep. Instead of the longed-for golden age the Christians have to face evil days of trial: the love of many shall wax cold. And the reason is just the postponement of the coming. But for all that the first age hoped and continued to hope. When one disciple of Jesus after another died and thus tasted of death without having seen the kingdom of heaven, then all remaining hope was centred upon the last handful of survivors. It would seem that one John (probably not the son of Zebedee to whom Jesus promised the martyr's death) survived all the other disciples, so that the Christians began to say to each other, "This disciple will not die before the Parousia." Finally he, too, died, and the fourth evangelist hastened to remove from Jesus the reproach of an unfulfilled promise. But a similar legend was also in circulation concerning St Peter. Words of Jesus were handed down which purported to have been addressed to him, such as "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against thee"; or, "Verily thine eyes shall never to all eternity be

closed unto the light of this world." This hope, too, turned out to be deceptive. The sayings of Jesus were either laid aside or only entered into the canon in an entirely changed form. Like the discourse of Jesus concerning the last days, other eschatological passages in ancient writings had to be toned down as the expected end of the world did not arrive. In the Epistle of Barnabas we find this passage: "The whole time of our faith will profit us nothing if we do not withstand, as it beseemeth the children of God, now in this godless age and in the tribulations that are to come, so that Satan find no entrance." Compare with this the form of this saying in the apostolic Didache: "The whole time of your faith will profit you nothing if ye attain not to perfection in the last age." The very word that gave life to the saying, the "now," has been omitted. And in like manner the Didache concludes with the dogmatic saying, "Then the whole world shall behold the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven." The "whole world," not, as we find in the earlier version, "you" or "we."

It is worth noting all these little utterances of hope disappointed or deferred, very carefully. They prove to us that the authors of these writings were no mere heedless copyists, but took an exact account of the difference between the actual course of events and prophecy. Jesus did not come. The kingdom of God was still in the future. Now whilst the evangelists tried to forget their disappointment by setting up the theory of postponement, many Christians began to murmur, some secretly, others

openly, because of their deceived expectations. Our oldest proof of this is the Epistle to the Hebrews. The people to whom it is addressed were on the point of giving up the Christian hope. They appealed to the fact that a whole generation of Christians had died, "not having obtained the promises nor received salvation." Hence the whole edifice of Christianity struck them as mean and poor. There were lofty promises but without any guarantee, and the result was deception. From the last decade of the first century onwards ecclesiastical writers have continually to take account of such murmurs and such doubts. In an apocryphal passage quoted by the two so-called Epistles of St Clement, we read of sceptics who say: "Such things we heard in the time of our fathers already, and lo, we have become old and nothing thereof has come to pass." If the authors of the two Epistles of St Clement quote this saying and endeavour at the same time to allay the uneasiness expressed therein, then the inference is that similar doubts were expressed in their own day. In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read of mockers giving utterance to doubts of much the same nature. "Where is the promise of His coming? For from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Those to whom the Epistle of St James was addressed are likewise deceived and have become impatient. They are for ever hearing the word 'soon,' but it never came to pass. Very much the same state of things may be inferred from the Didache, the Epistle of St Barnabas, the "Shepherd" of Hermas.

Everywhere the doubt is expressed: "Is it true after all?" We may perhaps draw a very far-reaching conclusion from these scattered indications. A very large portion of Christians felt all the force of this deception, and hence lost all joy and courage. That is why the Christianity presupposed in the Churches by the Pastoral epistles, the letter of St James, Hermas, and other writings, is so nerveless, indifferent and frivolous. It could not overcome this great deception.

All the more admirable because of this background of doubt and despair are the joyful gladness and the full assurance of hope which speak to us from most of the writings of the teachers of the Church. Even though the kingdom is not yet come and the Parousia delayed, hope still abides firm and triumphs over all doubts and scruples. Nearly all the catholic letters and the apostolic fathers are full of plain indications: it is the last time. Most of them agree in seeing in this last time the beginning of the great tribulation with the last terrible temptations for Christians. Otherwise they often differ greatly in the vivacity and energy of their hope, but only to prove their truthfulness; for in hoping, each preserves his individual character.

Some Christians — there will probably have been a great number of them — live rather in fear of the coming judgment than in hope of mercy: so the prophet Hermas and the preacher to whom the Second Epistle of St Clement is to be ascribed. Hermas never really got quit of the Jewish uncertainty of salvation. Even as a Christian

he is full of anxious fear, and is acquainted with every feeling but that of confidence. The revelation, too, which he receives, "Fulfilled are the days of repentance for the saints," must have greatly increased his sense of responsibility for the future life and therefore his anxiety. He realizes that whole classes of Christians will not enter the kingdom. To which does he belong? The end alone will show that. Then he sees the great tribulation approach in the shape of the hostile beast. True, he fights his way through bravely enough in the spirit, but only at the cost of the most anxious care. He knows nothing of eager longing. The only thing that he wishes is a clear separation between sinners and the righteous. The Second Epistle of St Clement shows us how a Christian preacher declares his message of judgment, and summons to repentance his readers, entangled as they are in a maze of sins, and given over to worldliness. He does indeed begin with God's promises and the need of thankfulness, but he is only in his own element when he threatens. As long as we are still here upon earth let us repent, for when once we leave this world there is no longer any possibility of repentance. Then he summons up the day of judgment to his readers' fancy and the end of the world in flames, and pictures to them the dismay of the sinners and the triumph of the righteous. Nothing can save us from everlasting punishment if we obey not God's commandments. We have no advocate with God. Each man receives according to his deserts. Such were the thoughts of the majority of the Christians.

At bottom their Christianity was the Jewish and pagan fear of the unknown terrors of retribution after death—nothing better.

In other Christians hope assumes the shape of a firm, quiet, even somewhat dogmatic belief in requital. To this number belong the authors of the First Epistle of Clement and of the Epistle of James, and Justin Martyr. None of these are acquainted with any real longing for perfection, though James comes very near to it. Apart from this, too, thoughts of the return of Christ with all its dramatic concomitants and their appeal to the fancy, enter but little into their hope. The word requital contains everything for them. Sinners are to be punished, the just and righteous shall inherit the promises and become partakers of God's grace—that is to say, the grace they have earned. This faith in requital is strong enough to become a real living power, for it places the whole of this life in the presence of eternity. But it seldom inspires the soul with that glad rejoicing, that anxious expectancy, that impatience with which St Paul hoped. Nor is there anything distinctively Christian in it. Jews and Stoics met in the same faith in requital—the parables and commandments of Hermas, mainly Jewish in their character, are one of our chief authorities in this matter. The First Epistle of Clement dates from the end of the first century. How very rapidly, therefore, did the first wild enthusiastic hope cool down and assume a rigid dogmatic shape. Here the form was already found which assured the thought of eternity a place in the Christian life after the fading away of all dramatic fancies. This belief in

requital was proof against all disappointment caused by the delayed Parousia.

Hope's real heartfelt tones are heard most seldom where the ecclesiastical interests of the present entirely engross the writer. This applies to the author of the Pastoral epistles. He, too, is of course a man of hope, as were all the early Christians; when he thinks of the duty of martyrdom he utters even enthusiastic words of hope. But when he is fighting the Gnostics all along the line, or when he is establishing the constitution of the Church, his thoughts seldom go beyond the task of the present moment. It was difficult for such an eager worker in the cause of ecclesiastical order and discipline to think that all this was merely a provisional measure for possibly a week or two. In His own time God shall show the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer is not to be blamed for this attitude: the time was not one for idle expectation, but for a strenuous struggle for the right. Nevertheless he affords us an illustration of the truth that zeal for the Church and longing for the kingdom are not easily combined, or at least not in a like measure.

The author of the Johannine writings, an opponent of the Gnostics just as much as the pseudo-Paul of the Pastoral letters, is his exact contrary in one point. He is not very greatly concerned in the Church — as an external organization — and her ordinances. But as an immediate consequence of this he is filled with a mighty longing and an earnest expectation. He clearly realizes the provisional character of all personal conditions—even that of our relation as children to the heavenly Father.

He reminds worldly Christians of the fact that the world perishes with all the lust therein, whilst the moral personality alone endures for ever. But to the serious-minded, too, he exclaims: "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. When He is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is." That is a cry of earnest expectation which reminds us of Paul. It is true indeed that the great judgment day precedes the opening of the doors of blessedness, a day on which many of the Lord's slothful servants shall be put to shame. But our author's aim is that he and his friends shall have entirely done with the religion of fear and anxiety. The Christian is to be able to come into the presence of his Lord with courage and confidence and with true joyfulness. And that he can do, as soon as he stands rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God to him, and in his love to the brethren. He that loves has nothing to fear on the day of judgment. In consequence of this glad certainty of salvation, everlasting life comes to be for him a sure and present possession. The Christian has everlasting life now; he does not look for it as something uncertain, a something that will perhaps fail him, but he is absolutely assured of it. Neither death nor judgment can terrify him. Every sentence in epistle or gospel about life everlasting is a sentence of hope. The only point in which John is distinguished from most other Christians is in the stronger emphasis which he lays upon the certainty of his hope, and—as this hope lies in the present—upon the joy of this hope. He is one of those great men

who can walk securely upon earth because heaven is a certainty to them. The awaking of Lazarus expresses his own hope very impressively. Death is a sleep; even though the body decay and begin to stink, what matters that? Christ has power on the last day to summon forth body and soul from the grave by a loud word. This belief is of supreme importance for the age of the martyrs in which the author now lives. Christ is the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Him, even though he die, yet shall he live. With such a faith as this it was worth going forth to meet death.

In fact, persecution was the strongest impulse of all for the renewal of hope. At such times all the old Christian longing for the future burst into flame again. It is evident now that without hope the Christians are the most wretched of men. All manner of temptations, sufferings and tortures threaten them. Only he that hopeth can overcome. The First Epistle of St Peter is written with the object of awakening congregations that are in the midst of persecution to an ardent, earnest hope. It sets before them the greatness of this last great time of trial. For them that confess Christ there is consolation, for nominal Christians condemnation. Now the end must be awaited in prayer and in striving after righteousness, for the devil is going about like a roaring lion and is seeking whom he may devour. But our author is one of those Christians whose fear has been entirely cast out by their enthusiasm. "Praised be God, who begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The phrase "to give an answer concerning the hope that is in you," instead of "your faith," shows us to what an extent this hope is his one and all.

The somewhat earlier Epistle to the Hebrews was written during dark days, when the hearts of men failed them because the promise tarried and doubts arose and joy was crushed. That which gives St Peter's Epistle its force and fire, the terrible earnestness of the struggle for life and death, is wanting here. The author of this Epistle is a man who looks back wistfully to the golden age of persecution, and would possess the martyr's courage and the martyr's hope in full measure, should the call come to him. The tedious dryness of the Melchizedek theories gives way at once to heartfelt tones of longing and enthusiasm as soon as he touches that which is his inmost possession, his hope. Even in the midst of learned disquisitions the reader is interrupted by the call: "Awake and look forward. He is coming. Hold your hope firm until the end." This hope really constitutes his religion. Just like the author of the First Epistle of St Peter, he speaks of the confession of hope instead of the confession of faith. And as some of those to whom he was writing began to complain that the hope was never fulfilled, that Christians died without having inherited the promise, he added his well-known 11th chapter, in which he draws up the long roll of the Old Testament men of faith, down to Jesus. All of them were men of hope, all were apparently deceived; but their hope possessed vigour enough to overcome all deceptions. Here, too, he

finds the simplest words for his longing. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. We are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, on our way to our home on high. "There is a land of pure delight": that and many another similar strain has its source in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

As we should naturally expect, Christian hope assumes its boldest, often its wildest, guise in the martyrs themselves a short time before their death. The bent of Ignatius' mind, like that of the author of the Pastoral epistles, is ecclesiastical, and therefore, in so far, his nature is of this world. Even on his last journey when he is being conveyed to martyrdom, ecclesiastical concerns occupy him to the full. His six letters addressed to Asia Minor are almost wholly filled with the measures that are to be taken in the prosecution of the struggle against the Judaists and Docetæ, and with the striving to subject the Churches entirely to the bishop. Nevertheless hope appears far more distinctly here than in the Pastoral epistles. The difference arises from the fact that here we have a martyr speaking to us—one who knows that within a few weeks he will be standing face to face with eternity. The writing addressed to Rome is the classical document for the martyr's enthusiasm of this age. Ignatius' one anxiety is lest certain members of the church should use their influence at the court and obtain his pardon. He begs the Romans to be sure not to do that. His one longing is to come to God as soon as possible—never mind how terrible the road. To come to God and to rise from the dead is identical for him.

The intervening space between his death and the last day is non-existent for him. He has bidden farewell to everything here below. "Nothing in this world of sense is good." "The pleasures of this world, the kingdoms of this dispensation, shall avail me nothing. Better to die and be with Christ than to rule over all the ends of the earth. I seek Him who died for us. To Him would I go who arose from the dead for us. I am near to be born again; hinder me not to live; do not wish me to die." "My love is crucified; there is no fire within me that loves mere matter, but there is living water that speaketh to me and that saith to me from within: 'Up and to the Father.'" "The wild beasts are the road to God." The language which the martyr uses is of course somewhat extravagant. Yet who can tell all that passes in the soul of a man doomed to certain death? Polycarp's prayer, which is handed down to us in the acts of the martyrs, and which he is said to have uttered while tied to the stake, is far more composed and calm. Both in its tone and language it harmonizes with the character of sane sobriety which we gather Polycarp to have possessed from this letter. It runs as follows: "I praise Thee that Thou didst deem me worthy of this day and hour, that I should be of the number of Thy witnesses and partake of the cup of Thine anointed to the resurrection of everlasting life both in soul and body, in the immortal spirit. May I this day be received among them as a well-pleasing sacrifice such as Thou hast before prepared and before revealed and made ready. Thou the only true God, Thou who liest never." If the prayer is genuine, then

we would infer that Polycarp had no stock of original ideas or words standing at his command. He is in every respect a Christian of the old tradition —but then how high an opinion we must form of a tradition which inspires a man at the stake with a prayer breathing such quietness and confident hope.

The hope of the early Christians had its limitations, no doubt, and there was an element of hostility to the world in it. No thoughts of progress can be traced back to it. The gradual amelioration of the world, the interpenetration of every sphere of life with the Christian spirit, the growth of a new Christian humanity, were unfamiliar ideas to the Christian of the first age. "The world is rotten ripe for change": that is the motto of most Christians, at bottom of the millenarians, too, who expect the transformation of the world to be brought about by tremendous catastrophes. In all this we can trace the influence of an old civilization fast hastening to decay. The little company of harried and persecuted Christians could not fancy that they would one day come to play a great part in the history of humanity. Their citizenship was in heaven. Here upon earth they lived as strangers and sojourners, as pilgrims to their heavenly home.

But what a mighty power there lay in this future hope. It achieved two memorable results: it overcame the deceived expectation as to the coming of Jesus and the kingdom of God. Men like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Johannine writings derive such joy and confidence from their hope that the element of time, the question whether we come to Jesus or whether Jesus comes

to us, is a complete matter of indifference to them. And still more these men recognized that longing would cease to be longing if an attainable goal were set before it here upon earth. In the next place hope overcame the fear of death. Christ delivered all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hope made of the Christians a people of marytrs who looked upon death as sleep and made light of all threats and tortures. Lastly, we have this great gain which serious-minded Christians drew from hope for their present life. Life in the light of eternity must itself become a life in the Eternal, in God, and in the good. Moral discipline, earnestness, self-denial, freedom from the world, are all fortified by this resolute looking forward to the judgment and the vision of God. It is true that this applies not to the general mass of the Christians, but only to the serious-minded.

Whilst theology underwent a complete transformation through its alternations of controversy and agreement with Jews, Greeks, and Gnostics, hope, the main element in personal religion, remained the same. The Christianity that hopes is the Christianity of the early days. The martyrs Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin take up exactly the same attitude to the present and the future, to death and to life, as Paul and Jesus did a century before. When the flame of hope flickers or actually goes out, Christianity is immediately extinguished with it.

PERSONAL RELIGION IN THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Christian Mode of Life.

From the very first there was a sharp distinction between the Christianity that was actually lived in the churches and the Christianity which the teachers of the Church postulated in their writings. It is the old chasm between the real and the ideal. The higher and the purer the ideal, the greater the divergence was bound to appear the more severe the criticism to be applied. That which is called worldliness did not make its way into Christianity through decay from some high level of excellence. It came through the mission itself as each new convert brought in a portion of the world along with him, and could not be raised at once to the level of the morality of the Gospel. Even in the apostolic age the world thus obtained a firm footing in the congregations, only it was, as a rule, still more or less concealed by the enthusiasm of the first love. There may of course have been isolated ideal congregations, but never an ideal Church. The First Epistle of St Clement gives us, it is true, a picture of the Church

of Corinth which is painted in an altogether ideal light; everything was perfect in this church—faith, piety, hospitality, knowledge, order, humility, unity, and charity—a magnificent picture. The descent from these heights to the actual reality a little later appears truly lamentable. But we may consider most of this description to be due to the vivid colouring of Greek rhetoric, the aim being to accentuate the contrast as much as possible. It is Paul and not Clement who presents us with a true picture of the Christianity of the Corinthians. It is true that in the sub-apostolic age we shall have to speak of an increase of worldliness. Enthusiasm, the 'first love,' grew cold, and the position was rendered still more critical by the entrance of great multitudes into the Church. In some places worldliness flaunts about without either shame or attempt at concealment, so that the sharp line of distinction between the world and the congregations was obliterated at a very early date. Then came the distraction consequent upon the Gnostic controversies, which completely disorganized the congregations and often produced actual schism. The subsequent persecutions should have favoured a moral renovation; instead of this they frequently rather encouraged apostasy and hypocrisy.

Nearly all the writings of our period bear witness to the great damage wrought by this process of worldliness, most of all the Pastoral epistles, the epistle of St James, and the "Shepherd" of Hermas. Decay set in among the leaders, and thence made its way through the whole of the congregation down to the newly-converted proselytes. Many of the old itinerant preachers, no longer exposed to the priva-

tions of a missionary's life in a heathen country, were the first to deteriorate in the shameless enjoyment of their privileges and in fanatical insubordination. This brought the 'Spirit' into discredit, and the place of the free teacher was taken by the permanent official. It soon became evident, however, that the presbyters were themselves in many cases too degenerate to be equal to the new and exacting claims that were made upon them. The author of the Pastoral epistles has to remind them of the elementary claims made by decency and order. Drunkenness, covetousness, coarseness, impurity, disorder in their own households, seem to have been found only too often even amongst the ruling elders. Such men exposed the Christians to the mockery of the heathens, and could acquire no authority in the congregations. It sometimes happened that proselytes were made bishops immediately after baptism, and then "being puffed up, fell into the condemnation of the devil." It is possible that the earnest admonitions of the Pastoral epistles contributed to bring about a real improvement in the state of the officials. A comparison with the demands which Polycarp makes of them points to this conclusion. But examples of bad shepherds were not wanting even in later times, and it is from Polycarp himself that we hear how a certain presbyter named Valens and his wife caused great scandal at Philippi, especially by their covetousness, but also in other ways. Hermas complains at Rome of deacons who deprived widows and orphans of their means of subsistence and contrived to profit thereby themselves. It was indeed a calamity for the Christian Church that from the very first the

officials in the congregations frequently fell so far short of the ideal of their office. Complaints against priests and bishops are as old as Christianity itself. With the Gnostic movement came recrimination and competition amongst the office-bearers. Many congregations split asunder. Conventicles of the Gnostic prophets were held by the side of the principal assembly under the bishop. Even where there were no Gnostics, as in Hermas' time at Rome, there were other false prophets of a similar nature who prophesied in secret and worked against the bishops. When the dividing line between orthodoxy and heresy had been clearly drawn and peace thereby restored to the Catholic congregations, it turned out that the bishops had serious rivals in their own congregations in the shape of the saints. Amongst all non-ascetic admirers of the ascetic ideal the ascetic was esteemed more highly than the priest. But the sanctity of these saints themselves — and the widows were counted as belonging to their number—was often of a somewhat fragile character. At a very early date we hear of widows in receipt of the charity of the congregation by reason of their honourable title, who nevertheless lived in luxury or simply went out in quest of a husband. It was so comfortable and profitable to be called widow that many women had themselves enrolled in the sacred order though they possessed means enough to support themselves and their children. Later on, the bishops had to meet yet another form of competition. Able teachers founded schools which became the intellectual centres of the congregations, to the great annoyance of many of the official leaders.

If the leaders instead of resisting the progress of corruption had often enough themselves given way to it, we cannot be surprised if we find that the condition of the congregations had, speaking generally, deteriorated considerably at a very early date. We can already see the different classes of Christians with their special class sins. Amongst the women, the love of dress and finery increases to such an extent that it passes the bounds of decency. They are great gossips into the bargain. The warning of the letter to Titus addressed to the older women, that they should not suffer themselves to be enslaved by drink, gives rise to serious reflections. The rich and well-to-do soon degenerate into a merely nominal worldly Christianity. St James attacks them with such vehemence that the reader of his epistle is bound to ask himself whether his severe strictures are not intended for people outside the Church altogether. But St James is not writing for such; he really means rich Christians. They blaspheme the Christian name, for they do violence to the poorer brethren of the faith, and drag them before tribunals because they love gold more than God. They keep back the wages of the labourers who have reaped their fields, and so are the cause of the sighs of vengeance which mount up to God from these men. But they continue their life of careless extravagance and luxury. Such is the picture of the rich men of his day drawn by a brave teacher of the Church not quite one hundred years after Christ. Hermas confirms the statements of this call to repentance by the description which he gives of the state of things at Rome. For him, too, the rich and the merchants

are the chief representatives of worldly Christianity. When the merchants are on their journeys they are engrossed in their business and do not consort with the brethren. The rich do likewise, for fear lest they should be importuned for charity. It often happens that Christians suddenly become rich through some lucky turn of affairs, and gain reputation among the heathen. Then they assume an overbearing demeanour, they cease to attend the meetings, and henceforth consort with the heathen. Nor is the argument invalidated by the fact that Hermas very possibly borrowed it from some Jewish author. He applied it to his Christians. The conclusive consideration in this judgment of Hermas is the fact that association with the mostly poorer and less honoured Christians is felt to be a burden by the rich. The lower classes, however, are seen to have their signs of worldliness just as much as the upper. It was especially the slaves who caused serious-minded preachers to feel much anxiety. You might often have sought in vain for the most elementary morality. Slaves robbed their masters, or they cheated them and so endangered the good reputation of the congregation. Even if a Christian slave belonged to a Christian master the difficulties of the situation were rather aggravated than diminished. The slaves began to long for emancipation; they looked upon themselves as on a level with their masters, or even superior to them if they were better Christians.

In addition to these sins peculiar to separate classes, were the signs of increasing worldliness common in a greater or less degree to all Christians in general. It would seem to be natural to assign the first place

here to unchastity, seeing that in so many writings of this period this is the first sin against which Christians are warned. If we remember that the demand of the Gospel for the strictest chastity now came into collision with the tolerance extended by heathen antiquity to every form of impurity, and even of bestiality, we should not be surprised to find that unchastity in every shape and form caused the Churches a great deal of serious trouble. Yet this is not the case, or at any rate not to any considerable extent. The place assigned to the demand for chastity is due to the influence of Jewish tradition. In itself it does not afford us any proof as to the actual condition of the congregations. In the Christian writings themselves the struggle against the coarser sins of the flesh appears to be far less prominent than in St Paul's writings. We hardly ever meet with excuses such as he had to rebuke at Corinth. It was not so much immorality as the excessive chastity of many Christians which was the danger that threatened the congregations. For it was not only the Gnostics who looked upon entire continence as the sign of Christian perfection. It was the ideal of a good many orthodox Christians as well. Ignatius urges Polycarp to admonish the Christian women not to refuse the performance of their conjugal duty. This presupposes a struggle between the ascetic ideal and family life in many houses. We know that in St Paul's time there were spiritual betrothals at Corinth between a Christian man and a maiden. In the sub-apostolic age we come across the dangerous custom of Christian brothers and sisters sharing one bed. Hermas plainly

alludes to the practice, and there is also a somewhat enigmatic passage in the Didache which appears to presuppose it. Surely the only result of such ascetic *tours de force* was that a new gate was thereby opened for immorality. How often, indeed, are impure tendencies concealed under the cloak of religion. Or if devotional literature began to busy itself with the fabrication of stories of the conversion of great sinners—men and women—or of the preservation of chastity amid all temptations, then it took the enemy whom it combated into its own bosom. The introduction of the "Shepherd" of Hermas, too, betrays a curious kind of devotional taste. He sees his former mistress bathing and helps her in her ablutions. Then the thought occurs to him, "Had I but a wife of such beauty and such a character."

This excessive chastity, however, was probably only the aim of individual members of the congregations. On the other hand, the opposite reproach of the so-called διψυχία, the weak half-heartedness which could not come to any clear decision either for or against Jesus, affected whole classes. The Christian hope, the life of prayer, Christian morality, all suffered grievous loss through this indecision and hesitation. The dividing line between Christianity and the world was thereby often obliterated even more than by gross sins.

Another marked sign of worldliness was the decrease in public-spiritedness in many Christians. The apostolic age had been characterized—so St Paul himself tells us—by a deep concern for the good of the community. The apostle's congregations were nurseries of the love which Jesus had brought into the world. In the sub-apostolic age complaints are

rife concerning the poor attendance at public worship and the separation of this person or group of persons from the other. Gnostic theories exercised a pernicious influence in this direction. They incited Christians to a kind of religious epicurism: they were to cut themselves loose from all worldly ties and live in complete isolation of the soul. They gave no thought to love, *i.e.*, to the poor, the sick, prisoners, the hungry; works such as these were good enough for 'respectable' Christians who had not the Spirit. But even where there were no Gnostics there was not very much more public spirit. Those for the most part kept faithfully together who were in need of support. The others, the worldly-minded, frequently went their own way in search of honours or of riches. There was, however, a certain element of necessity in this decay of the concern for the public weal. The life of the community flourished at a time when there were as yet no Christian families, no Christian slave-owners, and the individual could therefore only live and subsist in the community. But as soon as Christianity penetrated deeper into the world, and consequently into the natural forms of association which had existed long before, the common life gradually lost its central signification. In such times of transition the great disadvantage of the change is often all that is noticed, whilst men's eyes are blinded to the ground that has been won. And yet this was the way which the development of Christianity followed. Little by little the communities became superfluous, subsisting only as associations for worship, until the need for them arose spontaneously again later on under altered circumstances.

The rapid increase in the Hellenization of Christianity, a process which was greatly accelerated by the Gnostic confusion, brought with it a danger of a quite peculiar nature. Greek Christians lost, or rather they never acquired, the sense that Christian piety is something altogether practical and simple. They took an exaggerated delight in speculation and disputation. These Greeks made the objects of the Christian faith the aim of their intellectual devices, just as every rhetorician chose his subject. They found something at once instructive and amusing in the fact that they had now received new problems from these barbaric Orientals. Hence it was that so many crowded into the profession of teacher. Given a certain amount of fluency, and a man might hope to become a celebrated Christian teacher. Even in those classes which were destitute of any real kind of rhetorical training the vice of pious gossip increased apace. Many Christians praised the clever preacher as they left the assembly without giving one moment's thought to the fact that the practising of what was preached was more important than all else. The stupid idle chatter about faith and justification arose in consequence of the public reading of St Paul's letters. It was Catholic Christians and not Gnostics who made use of the saying as to saving faith in such a way as to undermine morality. But the worst feature of all was the contrast presented between this gossip about spiritual things and the miserable condition of the elementary moral life. Jealousy and wrangling, slander and party strife, were all endured without any feeling of the contradiction to the ethical ideal that was thereby involved. Such was the

beginning of later Greek Christianity. After the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the Pastoral epistles and the Epistle of St James afford us some glimpses into this the earliest period of its history.

Such was the Christian life of the sub-apostolic age in many quarters. Of course there is a bright side as well as a dark to the picture. If it were not so, the attraction which Christianity continued to exercise would not be intelligible. The severe criticism to which the above-mentioned faults are subjected in the Christian writings should itself be regarded as a formidable sign. For it is entirely the Christians themselves to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of the dark side of the life of the congregations, and together with this knowledge we have in each case the vigorous reaction of the Christian conscience presented to us.

What we have to do is to endeavour to realize the Christian ideal of life itself, as it was maintained by the teachers of the Church in so pleasing a contrast to all these aberrations.

On the whole it is the ideal of the first great age, only it has been enriched—and that not to its advantage—by a dogmatic and ecclesiastical outwork. This outwork is in a great measure—not wholly —the result of the Gnostic controversy. Perhaps the development of the Church would itself have produced it. The confession of the orthodox faith is claimed as the essence of Christianity and the presupposition for every recognition of Christian life. Christians were, it is true, the faithful, even in the time of St Paul and earlier, but the formulas of the faith were as yet very simple. The expansion of the

Christological confession shows us how an even greater importance was attached to the scope and contents of the faith, how faith came to be a formulated knowledge, a primitive kind of gnosis. Then the strict conception of orthodoxy was evolved in the course of the Gnostic controversy; the creed came to be the distinctive mark amongst Christians. He that cannot repeat the orthodox creed is of the devil. Nor was it long before this new orthodoxy brought forth a whole system of uncharitableness, censoriousness, and slander, such as was scarcely capable of increase. Enmity to the unbelieving Christian comes to be the mark of the true Christian. That was the first defection from the Gospel.

In the next place, a prime importance was attached to ecclesiasticism, to subordination to the bishop and his jurisdiction. Originally the Christian care for the common weal furthered the mutual rendering of the services of love amongst the brethren and made them give heed to the voice of the Spirit in the prophets. As the new episcopal constitution was developed in the course of the sub-apostolic age, obedience to the officials of the Church came to be more and more regarded as of the greatest consequence. The First Epistle of St Clement shows us how the claims of the Church would have come to be urged above all else even without the Gnostic struggle. The author, writing on behalf of the Roman Church, endeavoured to restore ecclesiastical peace at Corinth, when the younger had stirred up strife against the older. To effect his purpose, he writes as though Christianity and ecclesiastical order were identical. Every defection from this order, every disturbance of ecclesias-

tical unity, is to be taxed as a heinous sin, for ecclesiastical order is of divine origin. Subordination to the presbyters comes to be an essential characteristic of Christianity. In a long series of homilies which are apparently but loosely connected with the principal subject of the letter, the value and the blessing of the discipline of the Church are held up to the Corinthians, and proved by the authority of the Old Testament, by their harmony with the order of Nature. Among the subjects of these homilies are *jealousy*, the cause of the disturbances at Corinth; *repentance*, *i.e.*, return to ecclesiastical discipline; *obedience*, *i.e.*, subjection to the divine order (that of the Church); *humility*, the opposite of the exalting oneself above ecclesiastical discipline; *peace*, *i.e.*, the harmony which is gradually to prevail, as in God's creation, so also in the Church; and, generally speaking, *discipline*. We here learn how these oldest Christians interpreted the Pauline panegyric of love. For them it is the panegyric of ecclesiastical unity. It is of course quite true to say that it was only the actual condition of things at Corinth which caused the personal duties of Christians to be so entirely subordinated in this letter to their ecclesiastical obligations. There is no doubt, however, that we here see the first steps on the road towards Catholicism. The struggle with the Gnostics accelerated this development of ecclesiasticism, and almost threw it into confusion. The Christian's first duty is now above all to be the faithful subject of the bishop, and to undertake nothing without him. Whoever does anything without the bishop serves the devil, so it is

said henceforth. It is especially in Ignatius that we find that the hierarchy has obtained a firm footing in the Christian life. We have gone back again to where Jesus began. That was the second great defection from the Gospel.

Both orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism are henceforth essential elements in the Christian ideal. No one refusing to give ear to their claims can be said to be in possession of the ideal. But at the same time it would not be fair to be blind to the great fidelity shown throughout this age to the old Christianity. One result of the struggle against the Gnostics was to sharpen the insight of the teachers into the practical and ethical characteristics of the Gospel. And besides, men like the author of the Epistle to St James show us that even without this struggle, the chief thing needful was not forgotten by earnest minds.

Most of the representatives of the Catholicism that is in process of development are unanimous in their enthusiastic proclamation: Christianity is practical piety, a new ethical life, a walking in righteousness, a doing of good works—nothing extraordinary, but just those of the every-day life—and love to the brethren. Speculations, mysticism, idle dreams and pious prattle—none of these nor yet asceticism is Christianity: they are something entirely foreign to it. This excellent principle is set forth with all conceivable clearness by the teachers of the Church.

The Pastoral letters, the writings of St John and the Epistle of St James, afford us the completest proof of this practical understanding of the Gospel.

The author of the Pastoral letters manifests an instinctive hatred for every kind of speculation and

controversy. He can clearly see that these things have nothing whatever to do with Christianity. What he wants is piety, *i.e.*, a purely ethical realization of religion. He describes its utility in perfectly simple language. God would not have controversy, but good works, for these alone are profitable to men. Piety, personal religion, is a great source of gain—a somewhat commonplace remark, but it saves religion from moral corruption. Where there are no fruits, corruption has doubtless set in. Our author combats ascetic tendencies such as celibacy, abstention from food and wine, bodily exercise which profiteth little, no less vigorously than the craving for discussion. Thereby, too, he saves simple morality and the faith in Providence, which are incompatible with asceticism. He goes to such lengths in his polemic against asceticism that he would have bishops married, and forbids Timothy to drink only water. He shows his sound and sober anti-asceticism, too, in his treatment of the widows. He limits the *vita religiosa* as much as possible, and leads women back to the tasks of every-day life—above all, to the education of children. Young widows are to marry again, otherwise they will fall a prey to Satan in the end. No 'superior' morality is demanded of the bishop, except that he is only permitted to marry once. He is to be a thorough Christian, and a pattern of Christian life —that is enough. Hence weight is attached to his Christian marriage and household, to his honesty, modesty, freedom from love of gold, sobriety and kindliness. Thus the clergy are to be reformed on the foundation of the simple Gospel. The Pastoral epistles by no means represent a low level of Chris-

tianity, a Christianity of just an average nature. On the contrary, the aversion shown for speculation and asceticism—the monkish ideal—is the presupposition of the genuine conception of Christian life. It must be admitted that these letters breathe a somewhat Philistine sobriety: there is an absence of any very great warmth or fervour of language. But in combating a number of extravagant fanatics and sophists, this sobriety was the salvation of Christianity. The author was a thoroughly sound Christian who was entitled — none more so — to the claim that he possessed the sound doctrine.

The author of the Johannine writings took good care that no reader of his Gospel should be in any doubt as to the practical character of Christianity. For him, as for the author of the Pastoral epistles, Christianity is faith and love. Faith comes first. The aim of the first twelve chapters is to recommend it to us, and to defend it from attacks from without. Then the last discourses of Jesus reveal the real essence of discipleship which presupposes faith as something purely practical. First comes the washing of the disciples' feet as an example of ministering love, then the new commandment, the testament of the love of the brethren. But the parable of the vine and the branches in the fifteenth chapter, affords us the clearest insight of all into the character of Christian discipleship. The disciple's aim is to bring forth fruits, to realize religion in good works. This bringing forth of fruit is only possible through communion with Jesus, or, as John says, by 'abiding' in Jesus. There is a mystic ring about the expression, and it is even possible that John borrowed it from the Gnostics.

But he himself immediately adapts the mystical expression to ethical requirements. Communion with Jesus consists in the faithful keeping of His words. Our only guarantee for its persistence is the keeping of His commandments, and the chiefest of these is love to the brethren, which is to go as far as the laying down of one's life for their sakes. So, too, there is no friendship with Jesus unless "ye do that which I command you." The sequence of thoughts is, it is true, illogical. Communion with Jesus is on the one hand said to be the condition for the bringing forth of fruits, and on the other, it is itself conditioned by the keeping of the commandments — in other words, by the fruits. Nevertheless, the aim of these exhortations is perfectly clear. Faith and a life in righteousness form one indivisible whole, and the righteous life is God's aim in uniting us with Jesus. Exactly the same current of thought runs through the first epistle, only the contrast with the Gnostic terms of expression causes them to be rather more accentuated. Nothing can be more magnificent than the opening words of his polemic against his adversaries, the purely moral conception of the knowledge of God. If God is light, then our duty is plain: it is to walk in the light.

There is no knowledge of God unless we do His commandments.

There is no love of God unless we keep His words.

There is no being in God unless we walk in Jesus' footsteps.

There is no being in the light unless we show love to the brethren.

A Christian is a child of God if he does righteous-

ness and loves the brethren. That is the only criticism both before God and men. Love does not consist in the mystic flight of the soul to God; God is invisible: we cannot love Him, therefore, directly. All love of God must show itself forth as love of the brethren, and that not in words but in deeds, beginning with the ungrudging gift right up to the laying down of one's life. The ethical character of the Gospel cannot be expressed more magnificently than in the solemn adjuration: the world with its cravings is passing away, but those who do God's will live for ever. It is only the constant repetition of the claim for the orthodox confession as the presupposition of all morality that reminds us of the difference between these statements and the sayings of Jesus. No man is less of a mystic than this John, for whom the ethical alone is eternal. True, he often uses mystical words; so, *e.g.*, in the celebrated passage of the entrance of the Father and the Son into the hearts of the disciples. The reason for that is that in his time such expressions were very frequent among Christians, echoes of the former doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit. But whenever John adapts a mystical expression of this kind, he emphasizes the ethical demand, the keeping of the commandments, far more than the promised blessedness. The vision of God is reserved for the future. The road that leads to it passes through simple morality and love, not through speculation, and not through religious epicurism. Such is the motto of St John's practical Christianity.

The authors of the Pastoral epistles and of the Johannine writings were led to emphasize the

practical element in Christianity by their controversy with the Gnostic teachers who recommended speculations, mysticism and asceticism. The Epistle of St James has the same aim in view, though not occasioned in the same manner. At first sight it consists of a number of loosely arranged and loosely connected sentences, as though it were a congeries of Jewish and Christian proverbs. And yet there is an underlying unity. Throughout, the author strikes a clear and dominant note—the cry to be up and doing, Christianity is something practical—the fight against everything that is corrupt, torpid, morbid in the congregations. The ideal Christian—so he appears to the author's mind—is the active, energetic man who toileth terribly. This ideal he does not preach systematically, but sets it forth in a number of antitheses to the defects of his day. No mere hearing, but doing of the word. No service of God which consists solely in ceremonial observances, but a practically divine service, deeds of mercy to widows and orphans, and the keeping oneself pure from the contamination of the world. No boasting of faith and justification; works belong to faith or else it is dead. No pious prattle about spiritual things, but silence and action. No pluming oneself on the theoretical possession of wisdom. Wisdom is to be recognized by a man's walk, by the fruits of chastity, peaceableness, and goodness. The author of this epistle was certainly no spiritually profound teacher, far indeed from being a match for St Paul, whose misunderstood formulas he combats. But what a splendid, sound Christian he is, after the mind of Jesus, for all that! A truly comforting appearance

in the sub-apostolic age, completely untouched by the Hellenic and Gnostic spirit; no intellectual giant, but a hero in moral excellence.

Would that they had written in their own names, these simple saviours of Christianity in its darkest hour! They understood the Gospel of Jesus better than all later Catholic and Protestant dogmatists. The pseudo-James is, besides this, entirely untouched by orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism. Both the other authors, however, afford a good proof that the heart of practical Christianity remained untouched by those outworks of dogmatism and ecclesiasticism. Orthodoxy and ecclesiasticism were the necessary armour for the substance of the Gospel of Jesus. It needed a protection such as this, capable of resisting the world both within and without. They were not the main thing—not even for those who fought for them. The main thing even now was the fruit of good living, the doing of God's will, as John says, in Jesus' words. The authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the First Epistle of St Peter, of the First and Second of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, all thought and wrote in the same strain. In this main point they are all evangelical Christians.

The only question now is, What transformation did the practical ideal itself undergo, what aspects were bound to acquire prominence in consequence of the altered historical position? The one thing needful is still, at bottom, that which it was in the Gospel of Jesus—to be in the right relation to the three great realities, to one's own soul, to one's brother, and to God. Only—as we already have seen was the case in St Paul—certain special claims have to be emphasized

in consequence of the formation of communities and the contrast to the heathen surroundings; and besides this, an even greater attention has necessarily to be paid to the outer forms of the life of the community.

Sanctification is the watchword for the individual in relation to himself. As before, the word signifies renunciation of the sinful world and consecration of the entire personal life to God. Included in this is naturally a decided abjuration of all elementary sins, such as drunkenness, thieving and lying, all forms of idolatry, of magic and the like. But the resolve to live a life of purity excels all other demands. It often appears to be absolutely the most important element in the conversion to Christianity. Justin tells us of a Roman woman who had lived a life of vice. The very first thing that she did after her conversion by a teacher named Ptolemäus was to renounce her unchaste life. The case is a typical one. The dividing line between the Christian and the non-Christian is above all else a difference of attitude and of judgment with regard to the laxity and the filth of the sexual life amongst the heathen. The reaction against the prevailing immorality soon passed over into asceticism. The first commencements of the monkish ideal date from the age with which we are now concerned. In like manner more value was attached in many instances to external purity than to the purity of the heart. The strict ecclesiastical discipline which inexorably excluded fornicators and adulterers, but naturally could not control impure thoughts, was bound to play directly into the hands of hypocrisy in many cases. Nevertheless the strictness with which the early Christians

pressed this claim above all others was fully justified. All other Christian virtues, love to the brethren, trust in God, patience, peaceableness, can neither flourish, or are rightly regarded as tainted with hypocrisy where the individual has not yet gained control over his natural impulses. And again, how could the Christians have possibly engaged in their struggle against the whole world without including in their ideal the most absolute demand for chastity? The greatness of this, the earliest age, just consists in the refusal on the part of the Christians to make any compromises—without abatement of one jot or tittle they press their lofty ideal upon a world which, it must be admitted, is not yet equal to such an exalted standard. In spite of much backsliding on the part of individuals, the Christian congregations could honestly claim to be the homes of a pure and healthy life. And that meant a great deal.

Naturally, then, the chiefest concern of the Christian teachers in laying down their prescriptions for marriages, Christian as well as mixed, was to see the ideal of purity and fidelity realized in them. Hence their campaign against luxury and the love of dress. The custom of concluding the marriage ceremony before the bishop dates from the time of Ignatius, and proved salutary and beneficial in encouraging publicity and preventing precipitancy. The author of the First Epistle of St Peter endeavours to elevate the position of women and to ennoble marriage by his sensible admonitions addressed to Christian husbands. At the same time he warns the wives of heathen husbands against a mistaken spirit of proselytising, and urges them to

gain influence by their conduct without a word being said. The Pastoral epistles lay great emphasis on good order in the household and an honest education, and would have the women be good housewives. Nearly all the teachers of the sub-apostolic age recognize it as their duty to apply the principles of the gospel to the married state, without forgetting unmarried women and widows — the simplest and most natural of requirements, one would think. But we must remember that their task was to create a firmly-established Christian tradition in quarters where the most primitive conceptions of what was right and decent were often to seek. All the blessings of pure and healthy ideas and habits which it is still in our power to enjoy to-day are derived from this Christian tradition.

The restriction of brotherly love to the members of the congregation dates from the establishment of the congregations as organized bodies. It was necessary, and not in itself injurious. Reminiscences of Jesus' commandment of love without limits, and especially of love to one's enemies, are not wanting. The First Epistle of St Peter, Ignatius and Polycarp, dating from the period of persecution, admonish us to this love in splendid words which might just as well have stood in the gospel. Unfortunately the Gnostic controversy introduced a hostile and censorious spirit into the Church itself, and so brotherly love was restricted to orthodox believers. In the Johannine writings this restriction meets us in an altogether un-Christian form. "Not for the world do I pray," says Jesus in the high-priestly prayer. And how poor a thing after all is the new com-

mandment of love to each other—*i.e.*, of Christians to Christians—compared with the absolute boundless love enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount. As the Gospel of St John limits the frontiers of love in the direction of the world with a downright narrow-mindedness, so do the epistles against the heretics within the Church. Even the friendly greeting—the outward token of humanity—is to be refused to the man who holds not the doctrine "Jesus Christ come in the flesh." The duty of intercessory prayer is not to extend as far as those who have committed deadly sin. None of these propositions breathe the spirit of the gospel, for the simple Christian conscience cannot reconcile itself to them. But when once we have come within St John's narrow circle there is something great, it must be admitted, in the intensity of his love. From that narrow heart of his nothing but warmth and fervour shines forth. In fact, it may be said generally that love of the brethren, manifesting itself especially in works of charity and mercy, is reckoned as the essential element of religion in all the writings of our period. Sanctification and brotherly love are often mentioned together as making up the sum and substance of all the claims of the religious life. In controversy with the Gnostics, love is claimed as the characteristic of orthodox Christianity, for the Gnostic theories sanctioned religious egoism. And a further indication of the immense esteem in which love was held may be found in the fact that the saying "Love covers a multitude of sins" directly or indirectly colours the writings of the sub-apostolic age, and almost rivals in importance the statement as to the faith that forgives all sins.

Whoever has distinguished himself by works of mercy may hope to find grace with God in the day of judgment. However much we may be forced to admit that this conception paved the way even now for the later Catholic doctrines of salvation by works and human merit, there is yet much that gladdens one in it, for it exalts love, the truly divine element in us, above all else. The striking conclusion of the eschatological discourse of Jesus in St Matthew, wherein everlasting blessedness is promised all those who have given either food or drink, lodging or raiment, to one of the least of His brethren, or visited them in sickness or imprisonment, while those who did not do so are condemned, is surely more in accordance with the mind of the Master than all the statements as to faith and unbelief which the evangelist John puts into His mouth.

The principal direction in which this brotherly love was manifested in the sub-apostolic age may be gathered from the concrete instances mentioned by St Matthew in the verses just quoted. Hospitality, the lodging and caring for missionaries and the many other brethren on their journeys, usually comes first. Here, too, is the place to notice the custom of the washing of the feet which the Pastoral letters and St John presuppose as firmly established. If we next consider the single congregation in itself, we have the duties of the care for the poor, the support of widows and orphans with food, drink, and clothing, the visiting and caring for the sick. Later on there was a church fund for widows who were under the bishop's special care, though the Epistle of St James and Hermas still enjoin upon all Christians the duty

of visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction. In certain localities we find the custom of the ransoming of Christian slaves from their masters prevalent. A new duty was added to these in the age of persecution, viz., the visiting of imprisoned Christians, the earliest description of which is given us by the satirist Lucian. All these services of love were rendered personally in the oldest time, not by the bishop alone, but by every member of the congregation. Rich and fashionable people were especially expected to perform such duties and thereby prove the sincerity of their Christianity. At a very early date, however, personal service came to be compounded for by almsgiving, whereby the principal importance was attached to the amount given. The Lucan writings, Hermas, the Didache and the Second Epistle of St Clement, introduced this form of piety from Judaism into the Christian Church, and enhanced its reputation. One can already hear the ominous watchwords: "Almsgiving alleviates the burden of sins or releases a man from sin and from death." Luke and Hermas uphold the theory that the rich man can acquire heaven by his charities to poor Christians. Hermas maintains that he can even gain blessing on earth thereby. According to the second parable of Hermas, it is only the poor Christian who has religion in the strict sense of the word, and that as a poor man. His prayers alone find access to God, and not those of the rich man. If the rich man would have any share in religion he must obtain the poor man's mediation by his charities. That was of course the caricature of the evangelical ideal of love. Nor can we find much

consolation in the thought that this second parable was perhaps written by a Jew and was taken over unchanged by Hermas. It is bad enough that a Christian could appropriate such a writing. But most Christian teachers knew that the bestowing of money or of goods formed but a little fraction of that all-embracing requirement. Be he rich or poor, much more is expected of the individual member by the Church—mutual forbearance and forgiveness, sympathy and comfort, while each gives way to the other, and thinks only of his neighbour's well-being with patience and meekness. How far this ideal of love was realized in the churches we cannot tell. But the maintenance of the old ideal was a blessing in itself. Many proselytes were attracted by the rich manifoldness of the Christian love of the brethren more than by anything else. And on the contrary, nothing injured a congregation so much as when rich individuals abstained from works of love. The strength and the beauty of Christian love were most strikingly confirmed in the days of distress and persecution. It was then that the members of a congregation felt that the whole of Christendom prayed and suffered with them; money was gathered, letters were exchanged, good counsel and comfort freely given.

A special signification is now also attached to the summons to Christians to show trust in God: it is the duty to approve their constancy and their valour in suffering, and if need be in death. No other admonition is of greater importance in relation to God. The love of the brethren provides against all necessities both within and without. But when face to

face with the foe, the individual must depend upon God's comfort and promises. The Apocalypse and then the First Epistle of St Peter are the earliest of a long series of writings intended to comfort and to exhort martyrs. All later writers continue in the same strain. The example of Jesus, the first martyr, now exercised a mighty influence upon the hard-pressed Church. The Apocalypse, the First Epistles of St Peter and St John, hold Him up to the eye of the Christians as their leader in suffering and in death. "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." As the Master overcame, so, too, the disciple may overcome. The call to show a heroic trust in God was first of all addressed to the leaders. It is for them that John draws the picture of the true shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep, and of the cowardly hireling who abandons them and flies away at the approach of the wolf. There is no lack of instances of apostasy and desertion from the very first. The separation from all one's relations, the sufferings of imprisonment and of torture, all the dread antecedents of martrydom, caused many a brave Christian to waver for a moment. But all hesitation vanished as he looked forward and beheld the victor's crown. Make whatever abstractions you like, there is something inexpressibly great in these Christians, none of whom could tell whether he would not have to go forth to martyrdom on the morrow.

The expectation of the Parousia was of the greatest importance for the Christian life. It definitely turned the lives of all serious-minded people in the direction of eternity. They applied the words "the world passeth away and the lust thereof" to all that

ancient civilization had to offer. Hence there is scarcely any appreciation whatever of culture in early Christian ethics. It is true the State is judged least severely in spite of the persecutions, because it has both the power and the function of guaranteeing order and peace. And of learning, too, the Christians just took as much as served for edification and defence. Everything else—art, social intercourse, amusement—belongs, in the judgment of most men, to Satan's kingdom, for it is filled with a hundred temptations to sin. Very rarely indeed do we come across any statement that is free from this narrow restrictedness of view, and that shows us how the Christian is to go through life as master of this world and superior to it. John gives the motto: "Love not the world: all that is in the world is not of the Father." There was something narrow and sectarian that obtained a firm footing in Christian ethics from the very first. That was the reverse of its strength. The Christians came into the world as rebels against the prevailing religions and customs. They waged war against its faith and fashions, against long-standing habits and tolerance of evil. The world was their enemy; how could they have loved it? The time had not yet come for a positive appreciation of the benefits of culture and civilization. It was martyrs that were now needed, men who valued death for their faith more highly than all that the world had to offer.

It was a great achievement—this clear recognition of the Gospel's claims which maintained itself till the middle of the second century. A Christian—there is no doubt about this—is one who is master

of himself, who loves the brethren, and trusts God even unto death. This clear vision is about to be dimmed, it is true: Catholic aberrations, the extreme value attached to alms, fasting, celibacy, are near at hand, but as yet they have left the main points untouched. The preacher who composed the so-called Second Epistle of St Clement at a fairly early date had indeed no bad understanding of the Gospel of Jesus. Apologists such as Aristides and Justin hold up the moral greatness of Christianity to the heathen. But these were in themselves mere words, theories, and the real condition of many congregations by no means corresponded to the ideal. They were tainted by the canker of worldliness. It is a question even now whether the Churches can in the long run fulfil their function, which is to be the means of redemption. But this is not the really essential matter. The Christianity which Jesus brought into the world is something personal. In the strict sense, therefore, it can never be realized save in individuals. All outward forms of association entangle it with the world and produce a confusion between the ideal and the real. Christians are at all times single individuals. Such individuals existed in the sub-apostolic age; probably they existed in greater numbers then than later. It was only through these individuals that the Christianity of that age as a whole was impregnated with the Christian character.

CHAPTER XV.

The Redemption.

Christianity appeared in the world as the religion of redemption. Promising, as it does, everlasting bliss to mankind, and setting forth as the road thereto the doing of God's will, its aim is to inspire men even now with courage, strength and joy for the new life, through the gladness of communion with God. Jesus Himself was more than a prophet and teacher of God's will. He came to men as their Redeemer, to bring God near to them and lift them up to be children of God.

After His death, His redemptive power continued to work in the fellowship of His disciples, as the Spirit of Christ, to use St Paul's expression. The story of His life, and, still more, the new life of His disciples, kindled at His flame, now took the place of His Person. Christianity ever clung fast to this its claim. It did not merely hold up the goal to men and show the way to blessedness. It did, as a matter of fact, set their feet on the right road and led them to their journey's end by imparting the power of God which lives in Jesus and His disciples. Everything,

therefore, converges on the message of the love or grace of God.

What do we learn of this redemption in the sub-apostolic age? We must draw a sharp distinction between the actual experiences and the postulates. The latter we shall do well to regard with the greatest distrust. Christian writings are filled from one end to the other with statements as to the value of the death of Jesus and of baptism, of the new birth and reception of the Spirit. But they are partly apologetic, and partly devotional watchwords and formulas handed on from one man to another, a part of the language of Christianity, without any objective reality necessarily corresponding to them. The Epistle of Barnabas may serve us as a deterrent example: "We enter the water full of sin and of filth; we come forth with fruit in our hearts, for we have our hope set on Jesus in the Spirit. Before this our heart was a dwelling place of demons; when we received forgiveness and hoped in His name, then we were created anew from the beginning." Nothing could be better expressed. If it were only true! The authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the First of St Peter, the First of Clement, and Justin ascribe forgiveness and cleansing power to the blood of Jesus, and thereby prove that reliance was placed on this. Here we have merely theories, however, and theories alone are never able to guarantee a new life. Listen to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your

conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The learned author is, of course, perfectly right in refusing to admit that the blood of the sacrificial victims has any efficacy upon the conscience: but is the blood of Christ, then, any more suited to cleanse the conscience? How can the debt of personal, moral wrongdoing be wiped out by another's blood? Much superstition was attached from the earliest times to the blood of Christ and to baptism. The effects of both were conceived of as magical, even where no change in the moral nature followed. A necessary consequence of this theology of the blood of Christ and of the sacraments was that men contented themselves with the external objective facts and never asked themselves the question: Am I really a redeemed person in my life?

We are on different ground altogether when Christians speak of their conversion. Here we come across positive facts. The majority of every congregation was as yet formed of converts from heathenism. Here conversion was an occurrence the day and hour of which were known to every man, for it divided the whole life into two clear divisions. For most men it marked the breach with an evil past, when the filth of bestial barbarity and childish superstition were laid aside. The Christian fellowship conferred great gifts upon them: a pure and moral faith in God, the Gospel ideal of life, and an unshaken hope which lifted them up above all need. In addition they received at their entrance the promise of the forgiveness of all past sins, a gift that brought the greatest blessedness to earnest seekers, of doubtful value, however, to such as were of baser

alloy. The new converts were by the grace of God confirmed in their possession of all these realities. The sudden transition to their new condition produced psychical convulsions in many, mysterious ecstatic phenomena. Yet such cases were exceptional. The preponderant feeling which characterized the reception of these new gifts was something half rational, half superstitious. The immense impression made by conversion, the sharp antithesis between then and now, finds frequent expression in early Christian literature. If the expression is not all too stereotyped, we may be sure that there is some underlying experience. Yet in very early times such experiences came to be clothed in a traditional liturgical language which has to be accepted with caution.

But now we come to the principal question: Does the rest of the Christian life correspond to the conversion? Does the Christian really lead a redeemed life from baptism onwards?

All that we gather from the Pastoral epistles, the Epistle of St James, the "Shepherd" of Hermas, the sermon of Clement, leads us to answer the questions decidedly in the negative. Very many Christians indeed cannot be counted redeemed. The difference between the former and the present life was frequently imperceptible. Heathen laxity and licentiousness, superstition, uncertainty and fear, party spirit, care—all made their way over into the Christian congregations from their heathen surroundings. The state of things presupposed by the Epistle of St James and the personality of Hermas afford the plainest evidence. The readers of the Epistle, *e.g.*, are on so low a plane that it is quite intelligible that the question has been

asked whether they are Christians at all. The author inveighs against his rich readers with a "Woe unto you," as though they stood outside of the Church. And naturally, for they blaspheme the Christian name by their un-Christian conduct. Nor do the majority of the congregation appear to have been much better. "You crave for something and do not get it. You commit murder and try your utmost to secure the thing and yet you cannot do so. You quarrel and fight. You do not get what you want because you do not ask. When you ask you do not get it, because you ask for a wrong purpose—to spend what you get upon your pleasures." "Make your hands clean, you sinners, and your hearts pure, you vacillating men! Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep." Are these men still to be considered Christians? Yes or no, as you like it. Redeemed children of God they are not.

With the exception of Ignatius, the Roman prophet Hermas is the only Christian whom we get to know personally from his writings. The declaration at his baptism that his sins were forgiven him had made a profound impression upon him. This forgiveness, however, only covered his pre-Christian past. After baptism—so he was taught—the Christian was to sin no more, but remain pure. This was a sheer impossibility for Hermas and his family. His household was disorderly. His children blasphemed God, betrayed their parents, and lived riotous lives. His wife sinned continuously with her tongue. But he himself is far from being an ideal character. At the very beginning of his book his conscience pricks him because of adulterous

thoughts; his imagination is altogether corrupt and easily trespasses on forbidden ground. He behaves toward his children like a good-natured blockhead, and shuts his eyes to their failings. The third commandment contains a terrible confession as to his truthfulness: "Never in all my life have I spoken a single true word, but always and to all men have I spoken with cunning and made my lies pass as good coin among all; nor did any man ever contradict me, but they believed my words." Hence, too, throughout his life he knows that he is full of sin, and confessions of sin are never absent from his lips. His will-power is half broken. He has no backbone. Fear always has the upper hand in him. The picture which we gather from his writings as a whole gives one the impression of an unredeemed nature. Sin holds him fast in her chains. He cannot shake himself free. Hence his anxious question, "What must I do to be saved? How shall I make atonement to God for my misdeeds, if even sins of thought are recorded?"

The picture is, of course, incomplete. We have not got the whole Hermas, any more than the prophet Ezra in his prayers and questionings is the whole Ezra. His personality is divided into a strong and a weak half. The former is represented by the angel, Hermas' better self. True, the woman who appears to him in the first vision merely represents his evil conscience, which fills him with misery. But otherwise the angel is sharply distinguished from him, as the soul of all that is good and confident and glad and strong. He speaks but to utter vigorous commands. "Be of good cheer,

doubt not; be strong, believe; cast thy care upon the Lord." The fourth vision is especially instructive, where Hermas overcomes the terrors of the last vision by recollection of the voice which he heard, "Doubt not, Hermas." Thereupon Hermas puts on the armour of faith, thinks of the great things which the angel has taught him, and plucks up courage. His conversation with the angel at the close of the twelfth commandment is likewise full of comfort. When he asks in doubt whether God's commandments *can* ever be fulfilled, the angel answers: "If you resolve that they shall be fulfilled, they can be easily: they will not be hard." Hence in the end the picture emerges of a Christian who in spite of all weakness and corruption has good and glad moments in his life whence he draws strength to persevere bravely on his journey.

In addition to this there is the great consolation which Hermas is able to announce to himself and all Christians: God's great mercy affords all Christians yet one other grace, that of repentance. If they avail themselves of this at once while it is still to-day, their earlier Christian sinful life shall be wiped away. Hermas describes the impression which this message made upon him: "When I heard thee announce this to me in these very terms, I was awakened unto life." So in the third vision: "Power came upon you and ye became strong in the faith, and when the Lord beheld your strength He rejoiced." "It is as though a man should receive an inheritance a short while before his death that raises him up to renewed strength." Such was the effect of forgiveness upon Christians. It was,

of course, a law of grace, which had for its reverse all manner of terrors. Woe to the Christian that sins again! Yet they took it to their hearts and were glad, for once more they were able to hope.

There is no lack, therefore, of bright touches to relieve the prevailing gloom of the picture which Hermas leaves us. But he had no experience of the redemption which Jesus wanted to bring. Just as Jesus Himself is unknown to him, so likewise are the God of Jesus and the Gospel. God is not his heavenly Father! nor is He the God of love! He has no certainty of salvation, no comfort strong enough to overcome all the anguish of sin, no personal power for the good. Man remains the creature of his moods and feelings; there is none higher than himself that can set him free. After all, this is nothing but the religion of fear and hope, which prevailed before Jesus and which Jesus had overcome. Not a word is said of our being the children of God. St Paul's criticism of Judaism applies to this form of Christianity as well: "A spirit of bondage unto fear." As is the leader, so are the led. Hermas' description of his flock shows us throughout a lukewarm average Christianity. We hear not a word of redeemed men and women. The majority of Christians lacked the power to live the new life: they could get no further than good resolutions.

As often as Hermas divides his Christians into classes and passes them in review, the number of the bad classes is sure to exceed that of the good. This, however, is partly due to the fact that the vices of Christians are always more striking than their virtues, and afford greater occasion for talk. In all the

churches there lived a great company of men and women who had become new creatures through Jesus and His disciples, and had passed from death unto life. Theirs was a hidden life unknown to history—but the life was lived. The redemptive power of Christianity is brought before us so impressively in quite a number of Christian writings, that we feel that we have here the record of a real experience. The most striking of all these is the First Epistle of St John, full of the gladdest and yet soberest consciousness of an abiding redemption. Here we have a life that is lived above the world in love and the joy of God, free from all care and anxiety. The writer can find no words to express his praise and glad rejoicing. How boundless are the Christian's possessions: the knowledge of God, the forgiveness of sins, the victory over the devil, the confidence of prayer, courage on the day of judgment, the certainty of being a child of God and an heir of eternal life, perfect joy. "Behold what love the Father hath shown us, that we are called God's children, and such we are." He that has experienced all this in his own person may well attain in the bold flights of his faith to the statement that he is born of God, and in possession even now of eternal life. That is a judgment of faith, no empirical knowledge, and yet a judgment of faith which is based upon facts which are matters of experience — the keeping of the commandments, the love of the brethren. Hence the triumphant final judgment of this letter: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." That we are of God is also confirmed to us

by the Spirit with a sovereign self-consciousness. The Christian bears the witness within himself as Paul writes: "The spirit beareth witness to our spirit that we are the children of God." But just as St Paul ever took refuge from this inner testimony in the outer objective fact, the proof of God's love in the death of Jesus, in order to be secure from all the varying moods of his soul, so St John, too, places the water and the blood—*i.e.*, the manifestation of God's love in the gift of His own Son—by the side of the Spirit's testimony. It is only because God's love has become so clear to him in Jesus—beyond all power of expression—that he can live his glad life, resting on the forgiveness of sins. It is of course a comfort for him, too, to feel sure that, in case he falls away and his conscience accuses him, the all-knowing God is greater than our accusing heart, and beholds the soul of goodness in sinful man. And yet how poor a consolation this would be in itself. Does not the thought of God's all-seeing eye call forth fear and terror within the breast of ordinary men? But for John the fact that God can read his inmost being is a comfort, because through Jesus he knows God as love, and is sure of pardon through faith in this love. We need but to compare John with Hermas if we would realize the difference that it makes for a Christian whether Jesus is ever before his soul or not. Though they are nearly contemporaries, the divergence between the two is immense. Hermas—a man who never gets beyond a state of alternate fear and hope, without trust in God and His love, his horizon limited by sin and the avoidance of sin. John, the sober Christian, who by no means considers himself

to be sinless, but has nevertheless attained to the unshaken conviction, through experience of God's love, that he is a child of God in spite of all sin, and in this conviction goes boldly and gladly forward to obtain the promises, full of love and confidence. It is just the complete contrast between one that is redeemed and one as yet unredeemed.

Notes such as John strikes, so full of the purest joy, are, it is true, not all too common. On the whole, it was the persecutions that were fitted to awaken the new life in the Christians. The authors of the First Epistle of St Peter and Ignatius are instances of this. In view of the sore tribulation the contrast with the world is accentuated, the devil stands bodily before man's soul. He has no other choice: either he must conquer or worship Satan. Temptations and cares which formerly hindered and oppressed the Christian are now easily overcome, since it is a question of life or death. The tares are separated from the wheat. Every Christian who clings firmly to the confession accomplishes the decisive act, bids farewell to the whole world in view of the promises. That awakens a hitherto unknown enthusiasm in the soul, a feeling of freedom from all former burdens, joy, longing, abandonment of all to God. Now the Christian praises God for that: he has a living hope which looks beyond death to the inheritance in heaven. He is glad with an unspeakable, a transfigured joy. Not till now does he enter into complete fellowship with Christ, now that he suffers with Him, looking forward to the rapturous joy of the revelation of His glory. In view of death he calls Christ his true life, his hope, his joy. To

come to Christ is his only aim. "How could we live without Him?" Wherever this martyr joyfulness speaks to us it presupposes redeemed men, for joy is the best token—everywhere—of the new and blessed life.

But redemption is also to be found wherever the moral task is clearly realized and the courage attained to fulfil it. In spite of their boundless hope, the Christians of our age were not, like Paul, of an emotional nature, but rather sober-minded, almost prosaic. Stormy, ecstatic outbursts do, it is true, flash forth now and then, but they are always felt to be exceptions, and it is just the teachers who have left us writings to whom they are comparatively unknown. Take them one after another, the authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the Catholic and Pastoral epistles, the Apostolic Fathers. With the exception of Hermas, the apocalyptic visionary, only one of them boasts of personal revelations, voices of the Spirit—Ignatius; but the only specimen which he gives us of these is of so episcopal and theological a character that the good man would have spoken in exactly the same manner even had he been uninspired. All the others, not excepting John, are noble-minded moralists filled with a sure hope and animated by great moral earnestness, and just as such they are the saviours of Christianity; but there is no trace of the ecstatic enthusiast about them. Nor are the modern experiences of grace any less strange to these men than the manifestations of the spirit of ancient times. Not one of them boasts of the rapid alternations of feeling, from a miserable sinner to a pardoned child of God, which he experi-

ences as a Christian in hours of blessed joy. Most of them rather, as a rule, look back upon pardon as a definite single event in the past, and expend all their power in the present, no longer to stand in need of it. Certainly one element in the greatness of this age is that Christians do not make much ado about their pious feelings and special experiences. Some of their teachers would in that case have without doubt themselves inveighed against the practice as mischievous, and likely to be attended by religious self-deception. So the author of the Epistle of St James. One of the immediate consequences of this great sobriety is that the joy of present redemption finds no expression in many cases. That is not to be regretted, however, nor is it a sign of decay. The first disciples of Jesus presented all that they had received from Him within the limits of the promises and the claim; it was only in their enthusiastic description of Jesus Himself that the gratitude of redeemed men finds expression. But the authors of these letters, living in a later age, had not to speak about Jesus but to point out the tasks of the present to the Churches. Their simplest, their most natural course, was therefore to say: As Christians, the greatest of all conceivable promises await us in the future, but their fulfilment is attached to one condition, that we should do God's will now in the present. That alone answered their purpose. And then by encouraging hope themselves and kindling moral zeal by their appeals, by calling attention to weak spots in the armour and giving good counsel, they furthered the true work of redemption without much eloquent palaver. Nor is it greatly to

be regretted that they appealed to the will of their hearers instead of to God's grace and strength. For Jesus Himself had followed exactly the same course. What else are His words than imperatives addressed to a man's power of self-determination? On no single occasion does He make any mention of grace besides. The later teachers were therefore likewise fully justified in not diluting their energetic moral appeals by the message of grace. All these moralists are really good disciples of Jesus, and take part in the work of the real — not the theological redemption. For he that holds fast the Christian hope and walks in the path of love and obedience, with his eyes firmly fixed on the great goal, has entered into the new life, whether he talks piously about it or not.

It was in another direction altogether that the sub-apostolic Christians went astray. Their real mistake was that they laboured under a misconception as to the sources of the new life. They gave up the reality and attached themselves to the shadow. Christian redemption is after all something exclusively personal, something effected by means of persons. It began when Jesus led His disciples to an unshaken hope, moral power, the comfort of God's love, victory over the world—even over death—by His words and the impression that He made upon them. It continued to flow on from this source through the founding of the Church which was inspired by Jesus' Spirit, in which, therefore, every new member came into touch with Jesus Himself. All Christian life in the future derives from the true disciples of Jesus, who hand on their impression of

Jesus to the Church and present something of His divine life in their own persons. Here are the two bed-rocks of our salvation—Jesus and His living disciples; these are proof against every trial, they are the great and comforting realities, the mediators of God's love. Here, too, was the source of all real redemption in the sub-apostolic age; it matters not whether Christians realized the fact or not. But for those realities they substituted imaginary objects—the blood of Christ, the sacraments—and made the certainty of their new life depend on them. The ignorance of Jesus that prevailed in the earliest missionary epoch is chiefly to blame for this. St Paul limited his preaching so uniformly and persistently to the death and resurrection of the Son of God that no impression of the historic Christ could be obtained from it. At the same time he attached a theological signification to the signs of membership which caused them to appear to be more important than the membership itself. The theory of the blood of Christ and of the sacraments was ready to hand; it had grown up along with the growth of the Christian consciousness when the written Gospels began to be spread abroad in the great Church of the Gentiles, and Jesus Himself became better known to all Christians. And so in spite of the new impression of the person of Jesus they cling to the old theory, their inheritance from St Paul. The writings of St John afford a striking confirmation of this statement. The Synoptic Gospels formed the author's spiritual food. He was compelled by them himself to put down his impressions of the future conveyed by the Gospel in the shape of a Gospel, so

that the person of Jesus—the person and not His death alone—should become endeared to and revered by the whole world. This same man plainly shows us in his letter that he practically continues to derive all his comfort from the old formulæ of the blood and the sacrifice. If this applies to a giant like John, how much more to Christians of smaller stature. A second decisive reason may be added. Men want to have something external as a guarantee for their salvation, and hence they eagerly take hold of facts—of historical occurrences and material things. Blood, water, wine and bread, possess the great advantage of being tangible and visible: they bulk larger than the invisible impression made by persons. The low level of culture which characterized the first age favoured this superstitious tendency. The age was not yet ripe for the understanding of purely personal greatness and nobility. The Gospels themselves, with their myths and their apparatus of miracles, lead us to this conclusion. A lofty ethical education is needed to reach even the theoretical certainty that persons and not things are that which is truly real. Hence it is that Christians have set up as the guarantees of their salvation, instead of the person of Christ, His blood, *i.e.*, its theological interpretation; and instead of the fellowship of Christian persons, the sacraments.

Hereby our religion has suffered grievous loss. In consequence of this transposition, the ethical element has been removed to the circumference, and superstition has been enthroned in the centre. He that has experienced the personal impression of Jesus and His disciples has received more than blood

and the sacraments can ever impart to the fancy: he has come into touch with the living God, and that alone can uplift us into the eternal. By contact with these realities, the substance, he experiences a joy and a gladness which he would like to impart to all those who are yet under the bondage of the shadow.

Concluding Remarks.

If the presence of great men was the chief characteristic of the first, the creative period, then the want of them marks the second. St Paul has no successor, no one who attains to his level. The itinerant preachers, the apostles and prophets, degenerate, and have to hand over the guidance of the congregations to the bishops and teachers. Amongst these there are many powerful characters who keep their aim steadily in view, but no man inspired to open up new paths and acknowledged to be leader by a divine call. The fact that the ecclesiastical authors write anonymously or pseudonymously proves to us more than all else that even the leading persons feel themselves fallen on degenerate days and are no longer conscious of being personally called by God.

A great ecclesiastical organization now takes the place of the great men. The Church itself dates from the earliest period. St Paul was one of the founders. But it is only in our period that it quite comes to occupy its dominating position. The creative spirit, hitherto free and untrammelled, is now confined within ecclesiastical forms and institutions which acquire their great power for the very reason that the Spirit of Jesus and His apostles is

counted as their origin. Almost within the lifetime of disciples of Jesus, the past comes to be surrounded with a halo of sanctity, whereby, as ever on such occasions, creations of a very late date are uncritically ascribed to earlier days. We may even say that we have here the main characteristic of the development of churches: the thoroughgoing depreciation of the present, while the past is idealized and artificially extolled, and the period of inspiration is sharply distinguished from the period of tradition. Genuine and true feelings and reflections have driven men to take up this position, but also a certain want of faith in the living God. The most important characteristics of this Church, now ante-dated and ascribed to the earliest days, were orthodoxy and the episcopal constitution. Both were derived from the apostles, but wrongly so, for none cared less for just these things than the apostles themselves. Adhesion to the Christian religion is now determined by assent to the orthodox faith and by subordination to the bishop. All other marks of Christianity are only accepted as such when the ecclesiastical conditions have been fulfilled.

It is a characteristic feature of the intellectual development of Christianity, which finds expression in theology, that a powerful progressive impulse is kept in check by a sound appreciation of the value of the original Gospel. Christianity steps forth into the great world and assimilates all that appears to be compatible with its own peculiar nature. It is continually deriving fresh increment even from old Judaistic sources, in its apocalyptic, its ethics, and its ecclesiastical ideas. But it is to Hellenism that it

especially directs its attention, and that in an increasing measure. It preaches Jesus as the new God and transforms the badges of Christian membership into mysteries. It concludes an alliance with Greek philosophy, at first tentatively and cautiously, bases its apologetic upon the ideas of the logos and the moral law, speaks even of God Himself in philosophic language. Even as early as this we can trace the first beginnings of intellectualism, of the transformation of Christianity into a philosophy of religion. But when the Gnostic movement began and the Gospel threatened to be sacrificed, not only to Hellenism but to the whole intermingling of religions in the chaos of peoples, when it threatened to disappear altogether in speculations, mysteries, asceticisms, superstitions of every kind, then the majority of the Christian teachers and bishops at once cried out, "Thus far but no further."

And so instead of promoting its dissolution the Gnostic movement is a powerful factor in the preservation of the distinctive features of the Christian religion and in the defence of the old faith with its hope and ethics. Even though the victory over the mighty enemy was only completely won at the cost of the introduction of forcible ecclesiastical measures, yet the old Gospel remained unimpaired. In this spiritual struggle for existence Jesus Himself reacts against the corruption of the work of His life. And therewith the decree goes forth that in future the measure of all Christian theology is to be found in the Gospel.

The picture presented to us by the examination of Christian piety is altogether lacking in unity,

according as we look at the dark or the light side. A merely average Christianity prevails throughout the congregations, while at the same time the ascetic ideal begins to vie for the mastery with that of the Gospel. Documents such as the Epistle of St James and the "Shepherd" of Hermas give one a really terrible idea of the moral and religious level of many congregations. It would often seem as though the Gospel had lost much of its old power through its alliance with the world. And yet such an impression would be incomplete. There can be no doubt that even in this age the congregations are better than their surroundings, that through the preaching of Jesus and the presence of living Christians in their midst they possess and can offer something which the whole world lacks. But everything depends upon the individuals. In many writings of our age we can trace, not merely the Christian ideal, but its realization in individuals. We may venture to say that men and women existed in all congregations whose lives mightily inspired their fellow-Christians in times of weakness as well as in the day of strife, inspired them with hope and moral grandeur, with brotherly love and trust in God. Where such lives are lived there is Jesus with His redemption, and there is the living God: there, too, is the bright promise of the future, hope for the progress of Christianity throughout the world's history.

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